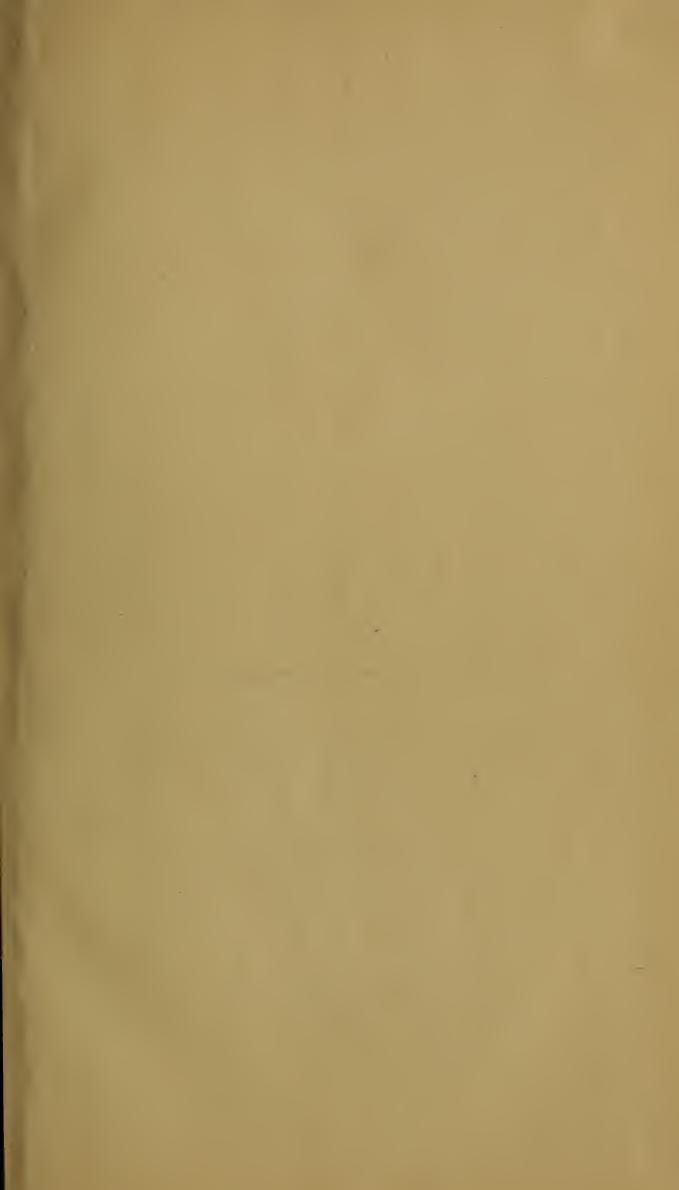
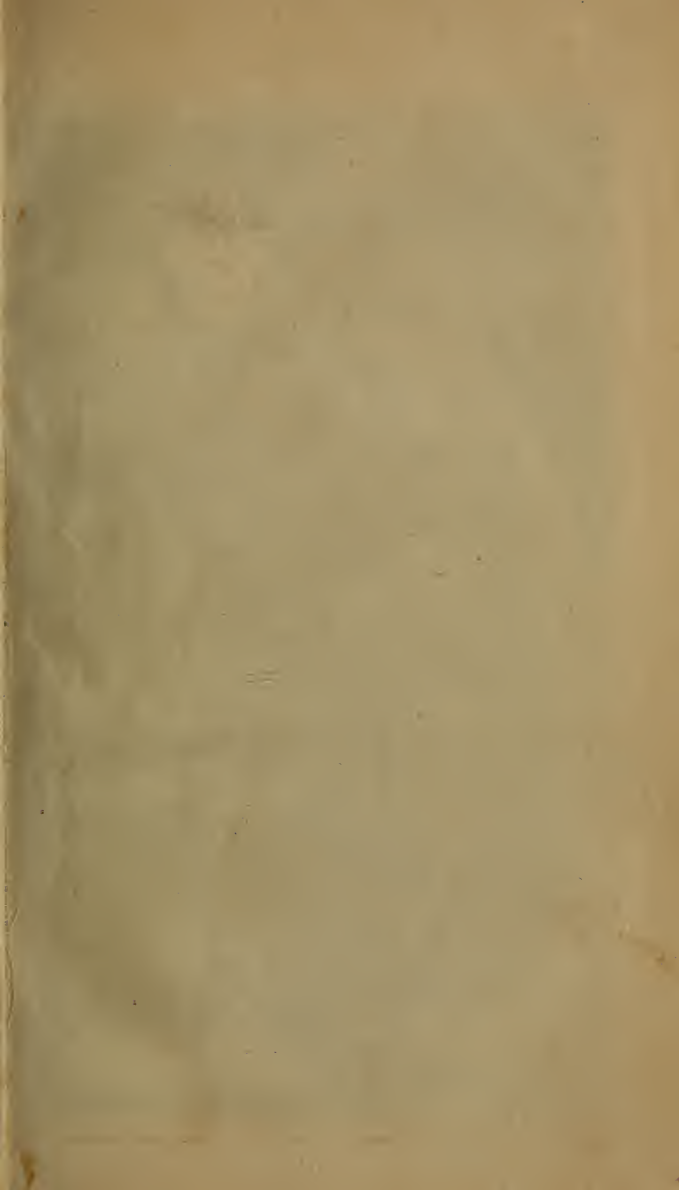




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W. H. Woodcut

THE
RELIGIOUS WARS OF FRANCE,

FROM THE
ACCESSION OF HENRY THE SECOND, TO THE
PEACE OF VERVINS.

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P R E F A C E .

THE sixteenth century is one of the most glorious in the annals of the human race. It is one of the grand epochs of reform, in which truth and civilization achieved decisive victories: it is the cradle in which the infant form of civil and religious liberty was rocked. Whatever freedom obtains in modern times may be traced to this interesting era, when the sovereignty of the people, and the right of private judgment, in matters of opinion, were first proclaimed. In the great struggle between the principles of the Reformation and the ecclesiastical supremacy of Rome, France played a distinguished part; and though she failed to emancipate herself from the tyranny of the Vatican, she retired from the contest without dishonour. Nearly forty years of resistance proved the sincerity of the Protestant party: they perished on the scaffold and the field with the heroism of martyrs. Their opponents displayed equal courage and fortitude, and regarded death as the passport to paradise. During nearly the last half of the sixteenth century,

civil war was waged throughout the whole of this fine kingdom, devastating its fields, destroying its cities, exhausting its wealth, and decimating its population. Of these religious contests this volume attempts to narrate the history.

The two most voluminous writers, on this period of the French annals are De Thou and Davila, and they are the most minute in details. Their facts are in very few points dissimilar; but in tracing events to their causes, they seldom agree. De Thou, the son and grandson of a president of the parliament of Paris, was imbued with the severe maxims of the magistracy, and detested all courtiers. He was enamoured of judicial forms, even to bigotry; and without making any allowance for the heated temper of men, in the troubled times of which he wrote, he condemns, without mercy, princes and ministers, generals and prelates, whenever they overstep the strict letter of the law. He lived and died in the Roman Catholic faith, and his style has never been surpassed for gravity, energy, purity, and method.

Davila was an Italian, one of the numerous adventurers who flocked to Paris, after the marriage of Catharine of Medicis with Henry II. He has been accused of leaning to the court party, but a careful study of his work compels us to dissent from this criticism. That he wrote with a bias, may be admitted; but where is the historian to whom the same censure,

in some qualified form, may not be applied? To be totally impartial, in the rigid sense of the phrase, seems impossible. The descriptive style of Davila is masterly. Battles, popular tumults, negociations, and intrigues, he depicts in glowing colours; and the fidelity of his topographical sketches must be acknowledged by any modern traveller, who has read his work.

To enumerate the poems, memoirs, biographies, collections of letters, and other documents, which relate to the Religious Wars of France, and to the principal actors who played a distinguished part in that memorable struggle, would occupy an inconvenient space. Our leading guides have been De Thou and Davila, in the general arrangement of our subject; other authors are cited in the text and notes, to supply their deficiencies, or combat their opinions.

In the present state of religious excitement, when the Roman Catholics are straining every nerve to make converts, and a section of the Church of England claims for itself the apostolical succession, it seems desirable that the Huguenots of France should be made known to the Non-Conformists of England. Our object, therefore, has been to condense into as small a compass as possible, all the facts which illustrate the rise, progress, and fall of the Protestant party in France, from the accession of Henry II. to the peace of Vervins, avoiding all long details of bat-

bles, but carefully explaining their causes and results. The moral lesson sought to be conveyed is the sinfulness and the uselessness of persecution for religious opinion. This volume is addressed rather to the young than to the old,—to those whose minds are yet open to conviction, rather than to the prejudiced or the exclusive. It professes to teach mutual forbearance, and to inculcate a respect for the rights of conscience. In laying bare the detestable machinations of Jesuitism, our object has been, not to heap animadversion on the past, but to warn present and future generations to shun the vices of their predecessors:—

“ *Consulere patriæ ; parcere afflictis ; ferâ
 Cæde abstinere ; tempus atque iræ dare ;
 Orbi quietem ; sæculo pacem suo ;
 Hæc summa virtus ; petitur hæc cælum viâ.*”

SENECA.

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RELIGIOUS WARS OF FRANCE.

INTRODUCTION.

THE doctrines of the Reformation were introduced into France at the commencement of the sixteenth century, during the reign of Francis I. In 1519, two years after Luther had openly denied the infallibility of the church of Rome, the faculty of theology at Paris denounced the new opinions; and, in 1521, the Sorbonne published their famous condemnation of the Lutheran heresy. These very censures defeated the object of those who pronounced them, for they attracted public attention; and persons of the highest station in the realm became curious to examine and weigh the merits of a controversy to which those celebrated seminaries of theological learning had attached so much importance. It is manifest, from the most authentic records, that so early as the year 1523, there were, in several of the provinces of France, great numbers of the nobility and gentry who had embraced the reformed doctrines, and even some of the episcopal order.¹

Many circumstances contributed to the successful

¹ Mosheim. Eccles. Hist. vol. iv. p. 87.

reception of the new opinions in France. Francis I. having no fixed principles of religion, and regarding modes of faith with almost equal indifference, treated Lutheranism as a question of policy. His hatred of Charles V. of Spain induced him to favour the Protestants of Germany, and this motive also prompted him to act with toleration towards their brethren in France, such indulgence powerfully aiding his ambitious views. However, when he did not require these foreign services, he hesitated not to persecute his subjects; and he is reported to have said, that “if he thought the blood in his own arm was tainted with the Lutheran heresy, he would order it to be cut off; and further, that he would not spare even his own children, if they entertained sentiments contrary to those of the church of Rome.”¹ In 1529 he sanctioned the execution of Louis Berquin, a gentleman of Artois, who, though frequently admonished and pardoned, persisted in preaching the new doctrines, for which he was burned alive in the Place de Grève at Paris. But notwithstanding this act of severity, the general conduct of Francis was humane and conciliatory; and his warm attachment to his sister, Margaret of Valois, Queen of Navarre, (who openly avowed Protestantism, and gloried in being its defender,) made him turn a deaf ear to the murmurs and remonstrances of the Catholic party. Brantome relates, that the constable, Anne de Montmorenci, conversing with the king on the most effectual mode of extirpating heresy, made no scruple of saying, “that his majesty should begin with the court

¹ Hist. de la Naissance et du Progres de l’Hérésie, par Flor de Remond, cited by Mosheim, vol. iv. p. 89, in notis.

and his own relations," naming the queen, his sister, as one of the most dangerous; to which Francis replied, "Speak no more of her; she loves me too well not to believe what I believe, nor will she ever adopt a creed incompatible with the dignity and safety of my throne."¹

It was during the reign of Francis I. that women first acquired that ascendancy at court, which, in subsequent reigns, enabled them to nominate ministers of state, bishops, judges, and marshals. This monarch, fond of gallantry and intrigue, thought that the charms and gentleness of the fair sex would soften the manners of his courtiers, who had hitherto known no other glory than that of arms. To give additional brilliancy to his court, he drew thither the most wealthy of the prelates, who gradually neglected the spiritual concerns of their dioceses. From their order the excessive luxury and elegant refinements of the higher circles of French society originated. Men of letters, wits, and poets were also specially honoured with the royal favour. Such were the guests who crowded the palaces of Francis, attracted by the love of pleasure, by avarice, and by ambition.

The object of the women was to win the regards of the king, of his favourite ministers, and of all who possessed credit and influence. Chastity soon ceased to be a virtue, and female honour was bartered for the privilege of bestowing honours and pensions. The functions of government passed from the hands of the monarch: his ministers exercised but a nomi-

¹ Brantome, *Vie de Margueritte*.

nal authority ; the wives and daughters of the nobles swayed the sceptre in turn, each retaining it so long as her beauty, talents, or intrigues commanded an ascendancy.

The gaieties and dissipations of the court soon produced their demoralizing effects on the prelates. Their wealth enabled them to give sumptuous entertainments, in which the vanity of the women had full scope for display. Their manners were more polished than those of the other courtiers, and secured to them more decided advantages. They had also the reputation of being more enlightened, and their female admirers used this as an argument to solicit for them a share in political administration. Their ambition was not satisfied with ecclesiastical power ; they aspired to be ministers of state, and they succeeded in their wishes.

The conduct of the wits and poets, who thronged the saloons of the palace, increased the corruption of the age. They lowered the moral standard of the court circles by their nauseating flatteries, their unchaste songs, and their profane epigrams. They soon made themselves of importance to the ladies, by praising the beauty of some favourite and satirizing her rivals : their talents were put up to sale, and purchased by the highest bidder ; their verses conferred genius and taste on their patrons, though nature might have denied them common sense. This mixture of women, bishops, wits, and military, formed what was deemed a brilliant and gallant court. The courtiers were divided into two factions, which respectively obeyed as their leaders the Duchess D'Etampes, mistress of Francis I., and Diana

of Poitiers, mistress of his eldest son, Henry the Dauphin.

The Lutherans prided themselves on the austerity of their manners, the purity of their lives, and their indifference to worldly pleasure. The self-denial of their pastors, contrasted with the dissolute levities of the prelates, furnished a theme for popular declamation, and the preachers thundered against the vices of the church. Their sermons pleased the masses, who believed that they saw truth where they saw morality. The absence of the prelates from their dioceses still further operated in favour of the reformers, as the inferior ranks of the Catholic clergy, disheartened by the abandonment of their chiefs, struggled with feebler efforts against the new doctrines. Thus the Huguenot¹ party gradually increased in numbers and influence, and, encouraged by the success of their brethren in the Protestant provinces of Germany, threatened to subvert the established religion in France.

The bishops, though immersed in the pleasures of

¹ Some etymologists suppose this term derived from *Huguon*, a word used in Touraine, to signify persons who walk at night through the streets; and as the first Protestants, like the first Christians, may have chosen that season for their religious assemblies, the nickname of *Huguenot* may, naturally enough, have been applied to them by their enemies. Others are of opinion that it was derived from a French and faulty pronunciation of the German word *eidgnoffen*, which signifies confederates, and had been originally the name of that valiant part of the city of Geneva which entered into an alliance with the Swiss cantons, in order to maintain their liberties against the tyrannical attempts of Charles III., Duke of Savoy. These confederates were called *Egnotes*; and thence, very probably, was derived the word *Huguenot*, now under consideration. The Count Villars, in a letter written to the King of France from the province of Languedoc

the court, were too clear-sighted not to perceive the precipice on which they stood; and though they had sanctioned the aid furnished by Francis to the Germans, in order that their rebellions might weaken the political power of Charles V., they were not disposed to tolerate the same opinions in reference to France, lest their ascendancy should despoil them of their revenues, as it had already despoiled the bishops of Germany. It was the dread of these consequences that urged them to insist on the sanguinary measures they proposed for the extirpation of heresy; admonishing Francis that the maintenance of the old faith in its integrity, would be a full atonement for all the sins he had committed, or might afterwards commit. Such was the policy of the courtier prelates; and the influence they possessed over the king may be judged of from the following passage from the historian Daniel, who thus paints his character. "Notwithstanding," says Daniel, "the passion of love to which this prince too greatly abandoned himself, he always preserved a great fund of religion, as well from a true piety as a wise policy: he took all the precautions possible to prevent novel-

doc, where he was lieutenant-general, and dated the 11th of November, 1560, calls the riotous Calvinists of the Cevennes, *Huguenots*; and this is the first time that the term is found in the registers of that province, applied to the Protestants. (Mosheim, vol. iv. p. 368, in notis.) These people were called Huguenots, because the first conventicles they held in the city of Tours (where that belief first took strength and increased) were in certain cellars under-ground, near Hugo's Gate, from whence they were by the vulgar sort called Huguenots; and in Flanders, because they went in the habits of Mendicants, they were called *Geux*.—*Davilla. Hist. des Guerres Civiles de la France*, p. 20. folio.

ties in religion being introduced into the kingdom ; he gave terrible examples of severity.”¹ On this extraordinary passage, the Abbé de Condillac makes the following just remarks :—

“ If there be no religion,” says Condillac, “ without faith in dogmas, faith in dogmas does not constitute the whole of religion : the complete fulfilment of the duties of our station is an essential part of it. Consequently, to praise the piety of sovereigns who violate their duties, is to prostitute religion in order to flatter the vices of the great. Now, without speaking of the amours of Francis,—of those amours which, according to Père Daniel, did not prevent him from being truly pious,—he may be reproached with devoting to pleasure the time that he owed to the cares of government. His want of economy, his magnificence and his festivals, impoverished his finances ; for so little order was observed, that no account was kept of the expenditure. He was then reduced to the necessity of surcharging the people with taxes to carry on his wars ;—and what wars ! were they undertaken for the advantage or protection of the state ? No ; it is a false glory which takes up arms without any combination for success, or any foresight of the result. What remained to him ?—victories and defeats, conquests quickly lost, a prison, a disgraceful treaty, a ruined kingdom. Such is the account which this religious prince might have given of his reign. He believed in certain dogmas, and burned those who did *not* believe in them ; such is the sum total of his *great fund of religion*,—such was his *true piety*. It is not said that he fulfilled all

¹ Daniel, A la Fin de la Vie de François Premier.

the duties of a king; it is only said that he gave terrible examples of severity; and yet this writer (Daniel) has the assurance to say, that he took all the *precautions possible* to prevent the introduction of heresy into his states. Saint Louis would have found others in the purity of his own morals. Such, however, is the morality with which the minds of princes are poisoned.”¹

The great apostle of the French reformers was John Calvin, a Frenchman by birth, being a native of Noyon in Picardy, where he was born on the 10th of July, 1509. His doctrines, particularly that on the eucharist, were adopted with great zeal by the Queen of Navarre. His name acquired a wonderful popularity after the publication of his “Christian Institutions,” which, in 1536, he boldly dedicated to Francis I. This work became a standard of faith and discipline, and gave a fixedness and unity to the preachers of the reformed doctrine. The Faculty of Theology at Paris drew up an answer, in which they minutely detailed the Catholic system of orthodoxy, and the two parties joined issue on these respective documents; but Calvin triumphed, and Francis, urged by the prelates, gave permission, in 1545, to exterminate the heretics by the sword.

The Baron D’Oppeda was charged with the execution of this sanguinary mandate. He was first president of the parliament of Aix, a man of violent passions and the most furious bigotry. He revived against the Waldenses, assembled in the valleys of the Alps on the side of Provence, a decree of that

¹ Hist. Mod. t. 13, p. 101. Ouvres Completes de Condillac. Edition 1823.

parliament, which had been passed five years before, but which had not been enforced. "All was horrible and cruel in the sentence pronounced against them," says the historian De Thou; and all was still more horrible and more cruel in its execution. Twenty-two villages were burned or plundered, with an inhumanity of which the history of the most barbarous people scarcely affords an example. The unfortunate inhabitants, surprised during the night, and pursued from rock to rock by the light of the fires which consumed their dwellings, only avoided one ambuscade to fall into another: the piteous cries of old men, of women, and children, far from softening the hearts of the soldiery, as mad with rage as their chiefs, only served to indicate the track of the fugitives, and mark the hiding-places to which the assassins carried their fury.¹

All the historians agree, that on this occasion the orders of Francis were most cruelly exceeded; and many add that the king, on his death-bed, commanded his son to inflict the severest punishment on the guilty perpetrators of these merciless atrocities. The severity inflicted, far from checking the progress of the Reformation, only inspired its professors with additional energy. They died on the scaffold and amidst the flames, with the heroism of martyrs; and the examples of courage and devotedness thus manifested were deemed proofs of the righteousness of their cause. Hitherto the Calvinists had only ventured to assemble at night to celebrate the services of their religion; now they dared to meet in open

¹ De Thou, tom. i.

day: they even erected a church in the heart of Paris; and the principal cities in the provinces quickly imitated the example of the capital.

Henry II. was tainted with a more persecuting spirit than his father, Francis I. He kindled fires for the heretics in Paris, Lyons, Angers, Blois, and Bordeaux; but each fresh persecution swelled the ranks of the reformers. In this reign the Jesuits commenced their machinations under the protection of the Cardinal of Lorraine, who in 1550 procured letters patent from Henry II., by which they were permitted to build an establishment in Paris. When the letters were presented to the parliament for registry, the procureur-general strongly opposed their reception, and the act of legalization was suspended in consequence of his remonstrances: but in 1552 the Jesuits obtained new letters patent, which contained a peremptory order to register the first. The procureur-general, however, persisted in his opposition, and the matter remained undecided for two years longer. On the 3rd of August, 1544, the parliament decided that, before the question was definitively settled, the letters of the king and the papal bulls, which the Jesuits had obtained, should be referred to the Bishop of Paris and the Dean of the Faculty of Theology. The bishop, whose name was Eustace de Bellay, did not hesitate to declare "that the bulls of Paul III. and Julius III. contained several articles which were contrary to reason, and which could not be tolerated or received in the Christian religion; that they in whose favour they were made, arrogating to themselves the title of 'Company of Jesus,' which could only be applied with

propriety to the universal church, of which Jesus Christ was the head, seemed to wish to constitute themselves that church : moreover, as the principal object they proposed to themselves was the conversion of the Mahometans, it would be better to give them a house on the frontier of the Turkish empire than in Paris, which was so distant from Constantinople." The answer of the Faculty of Theology was not more favourable. That body, by an unanimous vote, declared the new society " dangerous to the holy faith, calculated to disturb the peace of the church, and more fitted to destroy than to edify."

These two replies annihilated all the hopes of the Jesuits during the reign of Henry II. though they plotted in the dark, and waited their time. They retired to that quarter of the metropolis called Saint Germain, where they pretended to be exempt from the jurisdiction of the laws ; and where, under the protection of the prior of the abbey of Saint Germain, they carried on their baneful intrigues.

In 1557 a popular tumult broke out in Paris, which showed how numerous the reformers had become ; and what was more significant of the spirit of the times, it proved that, among their partizans, families of the highest rank and consideration were included. In the following year an event occurred, which put beyond all doubt the extent and influence of the Huguenot confederacy. Francis De Coligny, lord of Andelot, and of the illustrious house of Chatillon, was denounced to the king, as having embraced the heresy of Calvin. D'Andelot was a colonel in the French infantry, and had a high military reputation ; nor did the courage he had shown in the field forsake

him when summoned to the presence of his sovereign, the arbiter of his fortunes and even of his life. When questioned as to his creed, he fearlessly made this noble answer : “ Sire, in matters of religion I can use no disguise, nor vainly attempt to deceive God. Dispose as you please of my life, my property, and my appointments ; but my soul, independent of every other sovereign, is only subject to the Creator from whom I received it, and whom alone I ought to obey under present circumstances, as my most powerful master : in a word, I will die rather than go to mass.”

The king was roused to fury by this uncompromising defiance, and, in the first burst of his rage, menaced D’Andelot with death ; but he was dissuaded from this extreme act, and commuted the punishment into banishment from the court, with an order that the heretic should not move from his own estate, lest he might corrupt others. This sentence had no moral effect : it was known that many were as guilty as D’Andelot, though few might have as frankly confessed their guilt ; and it seemed partial and ungenerous to make an example of a man who had shown so much honour and daring. The usual effects of persecution followed ; the obnoxious doctrines increased in popularity, and the Calvinists, now secure of the support of D’Andelot, and hoping that all the members of his powerful family would imitate his example, fearlessly assembled in large numbers at the Pré-aux-Clercs, situate in the modern *faubourg Saint Germain*, and, at that time, one of the most frequented promenades in Paris. There they sang the psalms of Marot in the open air : it became the

fashion to visit these re-unions; some of the young courtiers went to ridicule the fanatics, as they were then called; others repaired thither from mere curiosity; while Antony de Bourbon, King of Navarre, and Jane d'Albret, his wife, animated the preachers by their presence, and scarcely disguised their attachment to the new opinions. The Catholic clergy now became seriously alarmed at the impending danger, for heresy had spread from the capital throughout the provinces, infecting the court, the army, the judicial tribunals, and even their own order, many of whom lent a friendly ear to the doctrines of the Reformation, as it released the priests from the restraint of celibacy. They urged the king to draw the sword against the Huguenots, and persuaded him to sign an inglorious peace with Spain, that he might direct the whole power of the crown against his dissenting subjects. The royal vengeance was first levelled against five of the counsellors of the parliament of Paris, who had openly professed the new religion: they were put under arrest: among the number was the famous Anne Du Bourg, of an illustrious family in Auvergne, and nephew of a chancellor of France. The king ordered their trial to take place without delay, particularly that of Du Bourg, saying "that he wished to see him burned before his own eyes."

Nor were these the solitary victims of regal displeasure and ecclesiastical intolerance. Informers were encouraged, by the prospect of reward, to denounce the innocent: a casual or ambiguous phrase was a sufficient warrant for arrest; suspicion was equivalent to proof: whoever sheltered a reputed

heretic was deemed to be a participator in his crime ; all confidence between man and man was lost ; even the members of the same family distrusted each other ; all the worst passions of human nature were let loose, and France became an extended dungeon. The inexorable severity of the government threatened the complete extirpation of Calvinism, when an unforeseen event changed the aspect of the times.

On the 25th of June, Henry II. was wounded in the eye by the Count De Montgommeri, captain of the Scotch guard, in a tournament : the injury was so severe that his life was immediately despaired of. He lingered to the 10th of July following, when he expired, leaving four sons, all minors, a queen-mother jealous of ruling and eager to be appointed sole regent, a court divided by factions, and a people disunited by difference of creed. With his sceptre he bequeathed to his posterity *the religious wars of France.*

REIGN OF FRANCIS II.

CHAPTER I.

FRANCIS II. ascended the throne of France on the 10th of July, 1559, being only sixteen years of age. Notwithstanding his extreme youth, he was already married to Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland: their feeble hands were unable to hold the reins of government, and the several factions into which the court was divided immediately conspired to seize on the administration of affairs.

During the eleven days that elapsed from that on which the late king was wounded to his death, Anne de Montmorenci, constable of France, the minister and favourite of Henry II., foreseeing that his influence would decline under a new reign, wrote to the princes of the blood royal, Antony de Bourbon, King of Navarre, and the Prince of Condé, who were the next heirs to the throne after Francis and his brothers, urging them to coalesce with him in framing a new government. Montmorenci was able in the cabinet and experienced in the field; but these qualities were stained by bigotry and intolerance. He had warmly and sincerely advocated the persecution of the Calvinists,—conduct which had gained

him the confidence of Henry II. ; and as he had supported Diana of Poitiers, Duchess of Valentinois, against all the private intrigues and open affronts of Catharine di Medicis, the royal consort, his power was almost unbounded. But he had now two enemies to dread, the queen-mother and the family of Guise ; the former sought to avenge herself on the constable for having espoused the party of Diana of Poitiers ; the latter were his personal and political rivals, and, as Montmorenci stood in the path of their ambition, they resolved on his ruin.

Francis, Duke of Guise, was one of the most remarkable men of his age. As a soldier, he had distinguished himself by the capture of Calais from the English, and by his defence of Metz against the Spaniards. He possessed, in an eminent degree, most of those external advantages which captivate the multitude—a commanding figure, an expressive physiognomy, a dignified and martial bearing ; while the affability of his manners, the courtesy of his address, and the chivalrous character of his sentiments, rendered him the delight and ornament of the court. He was a sincere and generous friend, but his enmity was stern and bitter ; still, when he had gained the victory, he was merciful and rarely sought revenge.

His ambitious schemes were powerfully supported by his four brothers, each of whom was as eager as himself to share the patronage and emoluments of office. These were Claude, Duke of Aumale ; Louis, Cardinal of Lorraine ; Francis, Grand-Prior of France ; and René, Marquis of Elbeuf. The Guises were of the house of Lorraine, which had only established itself in France in the reign of Francis I., so that

many looked upon them rather as foreigners than subjects. They were the uncles of Mary Stuart, who ruled her husband Francis I., and the influence of the niece was wholly thrown into the scale of her aspiring relations.

It was against this powerful confederacy that Montmorenci had to struggle, and it was the conviction he felt of his inability to resist it single-handed that had induced him to invite the Bourbon princes to join his party. Ever since the revolt of the famous Constable of Bourbon,¹ who had levied war against France, that family, by an express law, had been excluded from all posts of trust or responsibility, and Montmorenci now hoped to conciliate them to his interests, by again restoring them to political power ;—a measure on his part of pure expediency, for he had never attempted to effect this act of justice in the reign of Henry II., during which his authority was unbounded. Montmorenci, in fact, cared nothing for the Bourbons, except as useful instruments with which he might assail the Guises ; and he put his plan into execution by contrasting their claim with those of the princes of Lorraine, who scarcely deserved the name of Frenchmen.

Antony de Bourbon, who, by his marriage with Jane D'Albret, became King of Navarre, was weak, indolent, vacillating, and too fond of ease to take any active part in the troubled and stirring scenes which were soon to convulse the kingdom with civil war. He was only roused from his habitual torpor by the hope of recovering that portion of his realm

¹ In the reign of Francis I.

which had been seized and retained by Spain ; and as his success entirely depended on the armed interference of France, he was easily drawn into the ranks of the ruling minister of the day by the most hollow promises of assistance.

His brother, the Prince of Condé, who had married a niece of the constable Montmorenci, was a man of more determined character, and though not possessed of those high qualities which are required in the chief of a party, he compensated the defects of an ordinary intellect, by great moral courage and inflexible integrity. He was too frank and open to shine as a diplomatist in an age when fraud and mendacity were the prime merits of a negociator, and though he espoused Calvinism (or rather the right of private judgment in matters of religion, without a rigid adherence to that particular creed) with zeal, he neither quitted his habitual tastes nor abandoned his mistresses. His finances were scanty, but he was liberal to his followers ; and when life was at stake, or honour in peril, he displayed a magnanimous bearing, which commanded the respect even of his enemies.

The Prince of Condé was the intimate friend of the eldest of the Chatillons, known in history as Admiral de Coligny.¹ This latter had once been the

¹ The office of admiral, or high-admiral, of France, is supposed to have been created in 1337, during the reign of Charles the Fair. Valin, in his elaborate Commentary on the French Maritime Ordinance of 1681, gives a list of these officers, amounting in number to thirty-eight, down to 1626, at which date Henri de Montmorenci resigned the office into the hands of Louis XIII., or rather into those of Richelieu, who suppressed it by an ordinance, dated January the 16th, 1627, and also that

friend of the Duke of Guise, but they had now become the most bitter enemies, nor was their mutual hatred ever appeased. Few men have exhibited a character so stern, so unbending, so intractable as the admiral; he listened neither to parley or compromise, but his resolution once taken, he remained inflexible and unaccommodating. His brother, D'Andelot, whose fierce reply to Henry II. sufficiently denotes the severe haughtiness of his mind, had induced the admiral to embrace the reformed opinions; and, as soon as his judgment was satisfied of their truth, he supported them with a zeal, a constancy, and a perseverance which made him the idol and champion of the Huguenots. "Coligny and D'Andelot," says Brantome, "were both endowed with such imperturbable equanimity and coolness, that it was almost impossible to excite them to passion, and their countenances never betrayed their secret thoughts nor inward emotions."¹ The third brother was Odet, Cardinal Chatillon and Bishop of Beauvais, a keen observer of the world, mild in address, polished in manners, an adept in the intrigues of the

of constable of France. The latter office was never revived, but that of admiral was restored, in 1669, by Louis XIV., in the person of the Count of Vermandois. Richelieu, in suppressing this office, created another, under the name of the GRAND MASTER of navigation, and appointed himself the first of this order, which was continued down to 1669. The office of admiral, revived by Louis XIV., though clothed with great power, was very inferior to what it was in the ancient days of the monarchy. It was again suppressed at the Revolution of 1791, and revived by Napoleon in 1804. It was given to the Duke of Angoulême in 1814, but it merely gave him precedence over all other naval officers.

¹ Brantome, t. viii. p. 163.

court, and possessed of all those winning arts and graces which conciliate an enemy and fix a friend. The talents of this family, who were united among themselves, their connexions, their high offices, and the vast extent of their correspondence with the reformers of France, England, and Germany, rendered them most formidable to the house of Guise.

Such was the state of parties at the commencement of the reign of Henry II., and such were the leading men who aspired to control the government. But another competitor for power remained: it was Catharine di Medicis, the queen-mother, who, unable to get herself declared sole regent, attempted so to balance the contending factions, that she might become the umpire of their differences. Her present policy was to give the weight of her personal influence to those who would concede to her the largest share of authority, though she secretly determined never to depress their opponents so low as to deprive them of the means of resistance. Thus she hoped to be the arbiter of France.

Francis I. had exercised absolute power: he obtained this despotic preponderance by disgracing and humbling those nobles who gave him umbrage, before they had gained sufficient influence to render themselves formidable. The last advice he gave his son was to distrust the house of Guise, whose talents and courage were of an order to endanger the safety of the monarchy. In applying the same policy to all the other great families who had risen to a dangerous elevation, Henry II. would have pursued a course of conduct which would have concentrated in his own hands all the effective strength of the

government ; but that prince was incapable of acting with proper energy. Sovereign arbiter of the fortunes of his courtiers, surrounded by flatterers and slaves, he saw nothing but his palace, forgot his country, and passed his time in mere pleasure: he entrusted the guardianship of his throne to the Duchess of Valentinois and her favourites. Thus the Guises exercised royal authority as the ministers of the king's mistress.

At the death of Henry II. the Guises, who had contrived to marry their niece to his successor, were more powerful than they had ever been. Their relations and friends filled all the high offices in the court, in the capital, and in the provinces ; and so complete was their ascendancy, that the ancient mayors of the palace seem to have been revived. They effectually undermined the influence of Montmorenci, by describing him as a man of austere habits, harsh and imperious, who would banish all amusements from the court. The princes of the blood were represented as factious and ambitious, and the youthful monarch was reminded of the revolt of the constable, their ancestor ; and it was more than hinted that his descendants might imitate his example. Nor did they neglect to prejudice Francis against the Chatillons, as tainted with the heresy that D'Andelot had so unequivocally avowed. They thus succeeded in securing to themselves the whole administration of affairs, and conciliated Catharine by the sacrifice of the Duchess of Valentinois, to whom they were indebted for all their influence during the preceding reign. The Duke of Guise assumed the command of the army, and the Cardinal of Lorraine

took charge of the finances. Montmorenci was ordered to retire to his estates, for having supported the late king's mistress against the queen, an act of which the Guises were equally guilty, while the Prince of Condé was dispatched to Spain to ratify the treaty of peace,—an honourable exile, to which he reluctantly submitted.

From his estate at Chantilly, Montmorenci intrigued against his rivals. The King of Navarre was on his journey from Bearn to Paris, and very many of the ancient nobles joined him at different stations on his route ; all were incensed at the elevation of the Guises, who were stigmatized as foreigners by the friends of the old constable, while the Calvinists denounced them as enemies to the reformed doctrines ; and thus they were exposed to the united attack of a political and religious confederacy. Dardois, the confidential secretary of Montmorenci, kept up an active correspondence with the chiefs of the discontented party, who, under his superintendence, assembled at Vendôme to deliberate on the most prudent measures they ought to adopt. The expulsion of the Lorraines from power was unanimously voted, but much difference of opinion existed as to the best mode of carrying that resolution into effect. The most ardent proposed force ; the more moderate recommended negociation : after much discussion, the pacific plan prevailed. The King of Navarre was deputed to repair to court as their ambassador, demand an audience of Francis, expose to him the feeling of the country, the sentiments of the nobles, and the tyranny of his uncles.

The secret emissaries of the Guises had advised

them of the meeting at Vendôme, and of the policy there resolved upon. Thus prepared, they easily disconcerted the schemes of the confederates. When the King of Navarre sought a personal interview with the king, he was referred to his uncles, who knowing the weakness of his character, dexterously practised on his credulity, by diverting his attention from the demands of the confederates to his own pretensions on the provinces seized by Spain. They fed him with hopes of assistance, which they never intended to realize ; and, after long delays, showed him a letter from Philip II. in which that monarch offered to put down the Huguenots by force. This stroke of policy alarmed Antony, who feared that he might fall the first victim, and lose the principality of Bearn : he accordingly renounced all the projects resolved upon at Vendôme, and was easily persuaded to escort Elizabeth of France to Madrid, where that princess, affianced to Don Carlos, the son of Philip, was sacrificed to the father. The King of Navarre, at first received with every mark of courtesy, flattered himself with the restoration of his lost dominions ; by degrees his reception at court became cold, and his expectations dwindled into distrust : at length, wearied by protracted negotiation, he returned to Bearn, resolved to pass the remainder of his life remote from scenes of political turmoil and intrigue.

The Guises, having thus defeated the attack of their enemies, became insolent with victory. The duke, retaining the command of the army, declared himself grand-master of the royal household, an

office of which he despoiled Montmorency : he lavished on his creatures the ribband of Saint Michael, which became so common as to be stigmatized as the "collar of beasts ;" but the arrogance of the Cardinal of Lorraine completed the unpopularity of his family. The court being at Fontainbleau, many went thither to request pensions, appointments, and promotion ; the Cardinal ordered a gallows to be erected in front of the palace, on which he threatened to hang any petitioner who did not quit the neighbourhood in twenty-four hours. The immense crowd, nobles and commoners, thus disappointed and insulted, execrated the foreign princes, who forcibly banished native Frenchmen from the presence of their sovereign, and Catholic and Huguenot vowed vengeance for the affront.

Secure in the favour of the king, and emboldened by success, the Guises determined to strike a vigorous blow at the reformers, and ordered the trial of Anne Du Bourg, who had remained in prison since the death of Henry II. The accused, though now deserted by the parliament, which had been terrified into submission, defended himself with constancy and courage : he challenged the president, Minard, whom he denounced as a venal instrument of the Princes of Lorraine : nevertheless, Minard took his seat with the rest of the judges ; but on the 12th of September, 1559, he was assassinated in the street, by a pistol-ball, on returning from the hall of justice. Ten days afterwards Du Bourg was hanged, and his dead body consumed in the flames. He endured his fate with the heroism of a martyr, and the punish-

ment of this magistrate, whose moral integrity was unimpeached, kindled anew the zeal of the Calvinists.

The Jesuits, ever watchful to obtain a footing in the kingdom, now emerged from their hiding-places; and though denounced by the parliament, the Bishop of Paris, and the Faculty of Theology, once more sought the protection of the Cardinal of Lorraine. He and his brothers openly protected them; and they presented a petition to the king's privy council, in which it was declared that the Jesuits claimed no privileges hostile to episcopal supremacy, the authority of curates, colleges, or universities, or the liberties of the Gallican church.

After the matter had been debated before the council, the king granted his letters patent for the regular organization of the petitioners, and for the ratification of the bulls they had received from the Pope. The Bishop of Paris, however, added six articles to the following effect:—That the new body should assume some other title than that of Brothers of the Society of Jesus, or Jesuits; that they should not be allowed to change, modify, or recast their constitutions; that they should be subjected to the bishops without any power of appeal; and be prohibited from expounding the holy Scriptures till they had received a certificate from the Faculties of Theology, the bishops, or the universities. Such were the conditions on which the Bishop of Paris granted his consent. The act of incorporation was then registered, but with an additional clause, which plainly marked the distrust of the court itself; it was to the following effect:—that if, in the course of time, any

thing should result prejudicial to the prerogative of the king or the rights of the people, the constitution of the Jesuits should be reformed.

The legal recognition of this tribunal, who thus obtained a regular incorporation through the patronage of the Princes of Lorraine, filled the reformers with new alarms ; for they justly suspected that the Jesuits would ally themselves with the house of Guise, and become the active opponents of Calvinism. The discontented nobility and the religious reformers at once prepared a fresh confederacy, the former, to destroy the political usurpation of the Guises, the latter, to protect themselves against a repetition of the severities threatened by the precedent of Du Bourg. A meeting accordingly was held at La Ferté, a castle belonging to the Prince of Condé, and situate on the frontiers of Picardy. It was on this occasion that the prince resigned himself entirely to the views of Admiral Coligny, though he is said to have annexed this clause of reservation to his engagements ; “provided nothing be done or attempted against God, the king, his brothers, or the state.”¹ These restraining words, however, had no real weight, nor did they in the least influence the deliberations of the assembly, who resolved on the famous enterprise known as the “Conspiracy of Amboise.”

History has recorded few undertakings of a similar character, in which the design was more extensive, the motives more just, the plan more

¹ Veritable Inventaire de l'Histoire de France, par Jean Des Serres. t. i. p. 681.

skilful, the means more adequate, and the failure more miserable. The confederates determined to get possession of the royal person, to arrest the Princes of Lorraine, and vest the government in the Prince of Condé. There was no intention to injure the king, but simply to release him from the tyranny of his uncles; and the distinct avowal of this principle won the confidence of all loyal gentlemen in France, who regarded the Guises as foreigners. The leaders, however, held out another bait to the Calvinists, who were invited to take up arms in defence of their religion; and thus Catholics and Huguenots laboured for the same end, though without being impelled by the same motives.

As secrecy alone could render this enterprise successful, it was considered dangerous to put prominently forward either the Prince of Condé or the Chatillons, the choice of whom would have been sure to awaken suspicion. To discharge this important trust, a gentleman, named La Renaudie, of a good family in Perigord, was selected; a devoted partizan, who had his own personal injuries to avenge, and who, when a refugee at Geneva, had formed an extensive acquaintance with the exiled and voluntarily expatriated Calvinists. La Renaudie received ample instructions for his guidance: he freely told those in whom he placed confidence that, when affairs were ripe for action, the Prince of Condé would openly place himself at their head; nor did he scruple to confirm the wavering by saying that he acted under the sanction of the queen-mother. He urged every gentleman to raise as many soldiers as his finances would permit; and the poorer classes, at

the instigation of the preachers, readily enlisted for a service which they believed to be holy, on the assurance of their pastors.

In consequence of the enfeebled health of Francis II., his physicians recommended him to pass the spring of 1560 at Blois, as the climate of that town was best suited to his sickly constitution. When La Renaudie heard of this intention, he summoned all the influential conspirators to meet him at Nantes in the month of January of that year, and as the parliament of Brittany was fixed to assemble in that city, an annual concourse of strangers was not calculated to excite any suspicion. He there addressed them in a most inflammatory harangue, in which he commented on the history of the Princes of Lorraine, from their first establishment in France;—affirmed that they rose to dignity and power on the ruins of the most ancient native families;—accused them of a treasonable wish to subvert the constitution, and attributed wholly and solely to them the persecution of the Calvinists, the disgrace of the nobles, the poverty of the people, and all the disorders which convulsed the country at home, and menaced her with dishonour abroad. He even declared that the life of the king was not safe in their hands. “Already,” said La Renaudie, “they are circulating reports of the debility of his constitution, in order that they may with greater safety put him to death at their pleasure; then, finding none to oppose them, as the princes of the blood and the nobles are banished from the court, they will exterminate the rest of the royal family, which consists of mere children, and seat themselves on the throne. For my part,”

continued La Renaudie with increased vehemence, "I swear, I protest, I call God to witness, that I will neither think, nor speak, nor act against the king, the queen his mother, the princes his brothers, nor any member of his own blood; but I will defend to the last gasp of life the majesty of the throne, the authority of the laws, and the liberty of my country, against the tyranny of foreigners."¹

The whole audience shared the enthusiasm of the speaker; each bound himself by a solemn oath to expel the Guises, and denounced the most furious imprecations on those who should dare to divulge the secret. La Renaudie ordered them to repair to Blois on the 15th of March, and they then departed to their respective provinces.

The ruin of the Princes of Lorraine now seemed certain; so strict was the caution of the confederates, that not a whisper of the meditated blow had transpired. The Guises took the king to Blois, and amused him with festivities, quite unconscious of the gulf that yawned beneath their feet; but they were saved by the imprudence of their deadliest foe. La Renaudie had taken up his quarters in Paris, in the house of a friend, named Avenelles, an advocate by profession. Observing a most extraordinary number of visitors, who called daily on his guest, Avenelles became restless and inquisitive, and La Renaudie, never expecting to be betrayed, had the indiscretion to reveal his secret. Avenelles basely violated this confidence, by reporting all he had heard to the secretary of the Duke of Guise, who instantly dispatched a courier with the intelligence to Blois.²

¹ *Esprit de la Ligue*, t. i. p. 39.

² *Davila*, p. 22.

As La Renaudie had merely stated the bare fact of a conspiracy, without entering into any details, the Guises were still ignorant from what quarter the blow would be levelled. Any regular system of defence, therefore, was impossible in the circumstances of the case; but they had the precaution to remove to the small town of Amboise, in the vicinity of Blois, which was protected by a castle, and offered many advantages of position against a hostile attack. The suspicions of the privy-council, after floating from individual to individual, at last settled on the Chatillons, who were summoned to the royal presence; they obeyed with alacrity, hoping that their presence might aid the success of the plot.

Admiral Coligny was introduced into the king's cabinet, and the Guises hoped that he would commit himself at the interview, but his habitual caution did not forsake him. He denounced in general terms the system of administration, exposed the griefs of the people, and pleaded the cause of the Huguenots. The chancellor Olivier espoused his cause, and an edict was drawn up and published on the 12th of March, in favour of the Calvinists, excluding, however, such preachers as might be convicted of delivering sermons containing censures on the king, his brothers, the queen-mother, or the ministers.

When La Renaudie knew that the court had changed its residence from Blois to Amboise, he fixed on the 16th of March, instead of the 15th, for the execution of his project. The Prince of Condé and the rest of his confederates punctually obeyed his orders; but the Duke of Guise had the good for-

tune to defeat the plans of the conspirators.¹ When the Huguenots attacked the town, every preparation had been made for resistance, and they were repulsed with great slaughter. La Renaudie rallied the fugitives, who returned gallantly to the charge, but their chief, surrounded by a party of royalists, after slaying or wounding several of his opponents, was struck dead by a bullet fired from a distance. The Guises triumphed; they revoked the edict obtained by Coligny, arrested the Prince of Condé, commanded that no quarter should be given, and hung their prisoners on a gallows erected in the principal square of the town. Those who escaped this death were condemned, without any trial, to be tied hand and foot and thrown into the Loire.

As an illustration of the spirit of the age, and of the feelings which influenced persons of the highest rank, the following incident deserves to be recorded. During the battle, the Duke of Nemours recognized, at the head of a Calvinist squadron, a gentleman named Castelnau, for whom he entertained a warm esteem. He reined his horse, and asked his friend why he had taken up arms against the royal authority. "Our intention," replied Castelnau, "is not to make war against the king, but to present to him our humble remonstrances against the tyranny of the Guises." "If that be the case," replied Nemours, "sheath your weapon, and I promise you, on my honour, that you shall speak to the king, and I pledge myself for your safe return." Castelnau

¹ Davila says, that a Captain Lignieres, one of the conspirators, went to Amboise, and revealed the whole secret to Catharine, even specifying the names of the principal conspirators.

accepted these terms, and Nemours reduced his engagement into writing and signed it; on which Castelnau followed him to Amboise. He was instantly seized and put into irons, and notwithstanding the most urgent entreaties of Nemours, he was sentenced to death, the Duke of Guise insisting that Nemours had no warrant to act as he had done. On this proceeding, Marshal De la Vielleville makes the following comment: "This caused the Duke of Nemours great uneasiness and vexation *on account of his signature*; for had he only passed his word, he would have denied it, and given the lie to any man who had charged him with having plighted it, so *valiant and generous was this nobleman.*" "A remarkable instance," observes Anquetil, "of the point of honour badly understood, which fears a crime less than the proof."

Though the Guises had thus baffled their enemies, they felt that their triumph was incomplete, as they had only conquered the agents of the conspiracy, and not the principals, for it was certain that a conspiracy so extensive could never have been organized by La Renaudie alone. They rigidly examined his secretary, La Bigue, who doggedly refused to give any specific information, stating that La Renaudie kept his own secrets, and only entrusted him with general correspondence. The object of the ministers was to implicate the Prince of Condé, or at least to justify his arrest, but they failed on both points; the prince himself expressed the liveliest indignation at the treatment he had received, and concluded a long speech in these words: "If any man has the audacity to affirm that I have instigated a revolt

against the sacred person of the king, I will renounce the privilege of my rank, and attest my innocence by single combat." "And I," replied the Duke of Guise, "will not suffer so great a prince to be accused of so black a crime, and entreat you to accept me as your second."

Thus terminated the conspiracy of Amboise, Guise being as convinced of the treachery of the prince, as Condé was sensible of the hypocrisy of the duke.¹ A peace, ratified on such terms, was only the prelude to a future attack on the first convenient opportunity, and that opportunity was soon found. However, a temporary respite was given to persecution, and an ordinance was issued for the pardon of all crimes committed under the pretext of religion, provided the guilty returned within the pale of the Catholic church.

The court now returned to Fontainbleau, and it was resolved to convene a meeting of all the principal men of the country, without reference to party or creed, for the purpose of investigating the affairs of the nation, and applying a remedy to all proved grievances. The Montmorencis and the Chatillons attended; but, fearful of some plot, they were accompanied by a long train of armed cavaliers, the escort

¹ The Prince of Condé was liberated in the hope that the apparent confidence thus placed in his loyalty might throw the King of Navarre, the Constable, D'Andelot, and the Vidame of Chartres off their guard, and thus enable the Guises to seize their persons, for they feared to put the prince to death, and leave so many of his friends alive to avenge him; past examples having taught them that it is vain to cut down the body of a tree, how high or lofty soever, if there be any quick roots left which may send forth new sprouts.'—*Davila*, p. 27.

of the old constable alone amounting to eight hundred men. The King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé, though summoned, were urgently entreated to absent themselves, and they followed this prudent counsel. The debates at Fontainbleau were long and animated : mutual recriminations were haughtily interchanged ; and each speaker, while he denounced the opposite party as enemies to the state, claimed for himself and friends the merit of being loyal to the king, and devoted to the true interests of religion. Under these circumstances the meeting was dissolved, and the convocation of the states-general of the kingdom decided upon, to whom all the political and religious points of controversy were to be referred.

Although the Bourbon princes had absented themselves from Fontainbleau, the Guises strongly suspected that some of their emissaries were present, who were empowered to communicate with the leaders of the opposition. From information received, they arrested a Gascon gentleman, named La Sague ; they put him to the torture, when he confessed that the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé would take the field, as soon as the states-general were convened at Orleans, and insist on the death or the expulsion of the Princes of Lorraine. The Bourbons were soon apprized of the apprehension of La Sague, but they were at first uncertain whether he had made any disclosures. The imprisonment and execution of the Vidame of Chartres, one of their most faithful adherents, convinced them that their intrigues had been discovered. The king now specially summoned them to repair to Orleans, and

to have refused obedience would have been deemed an overt act of rebellion and constructive treason; to attend the states-general placed their liberties, perhaps their lives, in peril. In this embarrassment, it was determined that the Prince of Condé alone should proceed to Orleans, while the King of Navarre should secretly organize the troops of their party, to be in readiness to act in case violence was offered to his brother. The prince arrived at Orleans on the 30th of October, 1560.

The Guises were fully prepared for a complete victory. They had persuaded the king, by perverting the facts of La Sague's confession, that the Bourbons had conspired against the royal family, and urged him, for the sake of his personal safety, to arrest the Prince of Condé. To this advice the irritated monarch lent a willing ear: he ordered Condé into his presence, reproached him with his crimes, and without deigning to hear any reply, commanded his immediate imprisonment. His trial quickly followed, before the chancellor and some commissioners chosen from the parliament. The prince protested against the competency of this tribunal, demanding, as a prince of the blood, to be tried by the king in person and the peers of the realm; this privilege, though perfectly legal, and strictly in accordance with the letter and spirit of the constitution, was refused, and he was condemned to death.

When the sentence was made public, his relatives importuned the court for his pardon, but they pleaded in vain. His wife, Eleonora de Roye, niece to Montmorenci, accompanied by her children, threw herself on her knees before the king, who

sternly answered, "Your husband has assailed the crown and conspired against my life." In despair, the princess implored the intercession of the Guises. "It is our duty," they said, "to strike off the head of heresy and rebellion at one blow."

The King of Navarre was equally active to save the life of his brother: he even humbled himself to the cardinal of Lorraine, by whom he was rudely repulsed. Bourbon was summoned into the royal presence, but being informed that assassins were posted in different apartments of the palace, who had received orders to murder him at the least sign from the monarch, he hesitated to obey the mandate, nor did he yield before he had received three citations. On departing for this perilous journey, he said to one of his confidential friends, "Duty compels me to go. I will defend myself to my last breath; and if I fall, take my shirt, stained with my blood, carry it to my son, and may life abandon him sooner than the desire of revenge."¹ He was presented to the king, listened calmly to his reproofs, replied with modesty, and retired unharmed. As he was crossing the presence-chamber, he heard the Duke of Guise, who was incensed at his escape, exclaim in an under-tone, speaking of the young king, "Oh the fool, the coward! What a contemptible monarch we have!"

Disappointed in their hopes of arresting the King of Navarre, the Guises resolved to wreak their vengeance on the captive Prince of Condé; his death-warrant was already signed by several of the parliamentary commissioners, before whom he had been

¹ De Thou.

tried, but the royal signature had not been affixed to the fatal instrument.¹ The health of the king was now completely shattered, and his life hung by a thread: the friends of the prisoner still had hopes that the demise of the monarch would occur before all the formalities requisite for his execution could be completed, and they urged him to propose some amicable terms to the Princes of Lorraine; but Condé proudly answered, "I will ask no terms but at the point of the lance;" a defiance which must have destroyed all hope of escape, had not Francis II. suddenly expired. He died on the 5th of December, 1560, at the early age of seventeen, too young and inexperienced to be responsible for the misfortunes of his brief reign.

¹ Davila positively asserts that the execution was deferred by the Guises, to see if they could catch in the same net the constable, who, being earnestly called upon, did not appear, and also to involve in the same punishment the King of Navarre, against whom no sufficient evidence to justify his condemnation could be adduced.

REIGN OF CHARLES IX.

FROM HIS ACCESSION TO THE PEACE OF SAINT-GERMAIN-EN-LAYE.

CHAPTER II. SECTION I.

CHARLES IX. succeeded to the throne in the eleventh year of his age. The death of his brother Francis completely changed the relative position of parties, and the varied struggles for power, by the leading men of the several factions, rendered his reign one of the most calamitous in history. But before entering into details, we shall rapidly notice the political causes which gave a new direction to the system of government.

The king being a minor, it became necessary to establish a regency. To vest it entirely in the Guises, or the princes of the blood, or the Chatillons, was impracticable, and equally hopeless was any amicable coalition between the Lorraines and the Bourbons. The queen-mother, as natural guardian to her son, aspired to this high office; and she was zealously encouraged in her views by the chancellor, Michael De l'Hôpital, a magistrate of profound learning, incorruptible integrity, and pure patriotism. He clearly showed her that the jealousies of both parties would lead them to recognize her as regent—the

Guises, from an apprehension that the King of Navarre, as first prince of the blood, might be elected,—the Bourbons, from a fear lest they might be rejected as labouring under an accusation of treason. The judgment of the chancellor proved correct; each of the rivals acknowledged the supremacy of Catharine, who was advised by De l'Hôpital to keep both in check, curbing faction while she attended to the general welfare of the nation.

The death of Francis had greatly weakened the power of the Princes of Lorraine, for their niece, Mary Stuart, who had been their chief support during the present reign, was now without influence. The command of the army was taken from the Duke of Guise, and the King of Navarre appointed lieutenant-general of the kingdom. The Prince of Condé was released from prison, and, as a matter of form, retired to Bearn for a short period, during which his innocence was openly acknowledged. The nobles who had been disgraced under Francis returned to court, and among them the old constable Montmorenci, who resumed his ancient functions and regained his former honours. He took his seat at the council-board, with the two princes of the blood, the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine, between all of whom a rankling hatred still existed, and which threatened fresh convulsions; but Catharine foolishly hoped to hold the scales equally poised between these implacable enemies. Their first measures were indeed judicious: they released all persons who had been imprisoned for heresy, and restored their property; a general amnesty was also proclaimed: but the scene was soon changed.

While this reconstruction of the cabinet was being effected, the states-general continued their sittings at Orleans. De l'Hôpital implored the assembly to adopt such measures as would secure internal peace, insisting that differences in religious opinion ought not to divide the subjects of the crown into hostile factions, or kindle civil war. The president of the nobles demanded the reform of the court, of the clergy, and the magistracy; maintaining that the members of his own order alone discharged their duty to the state. The speaker of the third estate, or the commons, inveighed bitterly against the bishops and priests, while the orator of the clergy denounced the Huguenots, and implored the king to use his prerogative for the extirpation of heresy. The Calvinists shuddered at this harangue, which they stigmatized as the signal for massacre and spoliation, and the denunciator was compelled to make a public apology to the leaders of the Reformers. These several speeches led to no practical results; but a motion made by the King of Navarre was of a more serious character. He proposed a searching inquiry into the financial system of the last reign, and a special return of all excessive gratifications in money or lands to the court favourites, with a resolution that the recipients should restore the grants made to them. The whole audience felt that this was an indirect blow struck at the Guises, and the partizans of the Bourbons and the Lorraines at once prepared themselves for another trial of strength.

The imminent hazard which the prince of Condé had run, his high birth, his zeal and courage, and

the wide breach which separated him from the Guises, made him the idol of his party, who now determined to strike a decisive blow at their enemies. They demanded the immediate banishment of the Princes of Lorraine from the court, and from all offices of trust and authority, declaring that if this were not conceded, they would march to Paris, convene the parliament, and proclaim the King of Navarre regent of the kingdom. These terms being rejected, the Bourbon princes, Montmorenci and the Chatillons, and all the nobles of their party, prepared to put their menace into execution ; but their scheme was baffled by the chancellor De l'Hôpital, the only statesman of the time free from the influence of mere party spirit, and who desired the good of his country irrespective of self, or the ascendancy of any particular faction. De l'Hôpital advised the king to summon Montmorenci into his presence, and command him, under penalty of his high displeasure, not to quit the court. The old courtier dared not disobey the royal wishes, so peremptorily expressed : he remained, and the others were constrained to follow his example.

The states-general, convened at Orleans, were not yet dissolved, but all business was suspended, in order that a separate assembly might be held in every province, from each of which a report was to be transmitted to Orleans, there to be examined and decided upon. Paris had already recorded its sentiments, and specially demanded an account of all gratuities received by the Guises, the Duchess of Valentinois, and Marshal Saint André, during the preceding reign, with a general sifting of the national

receipts and expenditure. This message from the capital arrived at Fontainebleau a few days after Montmorenci had been ordered to remain at court, and it produced a complete change in his views, as one of his sons had married a daughter of the duchess, and he had himself shared largely in the public plunder.

The Guises were perfectly aware of the feelings of Montmorenci, and as they were all menaced with a common danger, there was no difficulty of dropping all minor points of difference, and uniting together for the mutual defence of their respective properties. The love of money made them fast friends, and the same base motive induced Marshal Saint André to join their party. This officer had been the early companion and intimate friend of Henry II., and a servile instrument of Diana of Poitiers : he professed himself a true Catholic and a bitter enemy to the Calvinists, but the real motive of his character was avarice ; he feared the confiscation of the estates he had received through the favour of the king's mistress. The coalition of the Duke of Guise, Montmorenci, and Marshal Saint André was called the TRIUMVIRATE.

This faction had a powerful ally in the Spanish ambassador, who had a seat at the council, pretending that his master, Philip II., had taken France under his protection, and such was the wretched state of the country, that this foreigner was tamely permitted to exult in his insolence, and have a voice in the affairs of the government. He was personally attached to the Princes of Lorraine, who sacrificed the honour and dignity of the crown to secure his

protection, for they hoped to attach the King of Navarre to their party, through the aid of the ambassador, whose station enabled him to promise Antony of Bourbon the amicable restoration of the provinces of which he had been despoiled by Spain.

The nation was now divided into two distinct parties; the one, formed of the triumvirate and the Catholics; the other, composed of the Protestants, and those who, indifferent about religion, desired a political reform of the government. The queen-mother still pursued her usual policy, attempting to hold the rank of arbiter, by balancing the rivals, and as she now deemed the Protestants weaker than their opponents, she threw her influence into their scale. An edict, in favour of the Huguenots, was published July 1651, called the edict of July, which exempted them from the penalty of death without a regular judicial condemnation; but even this indulgence was accompanied by a clause which prohibited them from assembling in any part of the French dominions.

This edict was the pretext of a simulated reconciliation between the Prince of Condé and the Duke of Guise; they met at the palace, when the king desired the duke to declare how affairs had been managed at Orleans. Guise accused the late king of having peremptorily ordered the imprisonment of Condé; on which the prince answered, looking earnestly at the duke, "Whoever put that affront on me, I hold him to be a scoundrel and villain." "And I also," replied the duke; "but it does not regard me in the least." They then dined together, interchanged vows of perpetual friendship, and separated with the bitterest feelings of mutual hatred.

It was now resolved to convene the famous conference of Poissy, and as it forms a remarkable epoch in the history of the religious wars of France, it merits particular attention.

Long before the doctrines of Calvin had become popular in France, Germany, having embraced the opinions of Luther, had demanded the convocation of a general council to settle disputed points of orthodoxy. Pope Paul III. yielded to this request, and in the year 1537, selected Mantua as the place of meeting; but the sovereign duke of that city refused his consent, in consequence of which, the assembly was transferred to Vicenza, and postponed to 1538. Various contingencies delayed the conference till 1542, when Paul convened the council of Trent, Thither the legates repaired, but so few bishops attended, that all proceedings were deferred to 1545. In the years 1546 and 1547, eight sessions were held. From that date the discussions languished to the death of Paul III. in 1549. He was succeeded by Julius III, in 1550, who re-established the council at Trent, when the sixteenth session was interrupted by the war of 1552. After an interval of two years, it was again convened by Paul IV.; and his successor, Pius IV., ought undoubtedly to have followed his example, as Protestants and Catholics, in Germany and in France, eagerly desired an orthodox code of doctrine and discipline. But so long as this wish was simply expressed by petitions, remonstrances, and party writings, the pope remained inactive; nor was he roused from this culpable lethargy till he was convinced that, in default of a general council, a special one would be held. He then issued a bull for a convocation at Trent, at Easter

1561 ; but the fitting time had passed. In the month of August of that year, the famous colloquy of Poissy was resolved upon in France, so called from a small village in which the parties met, at a short distance from Saint-Germain, where the royal family resided.¹

The session opened on the 9th of September of the same year. The king attended the first sitting, accompanied by the queen-mother, his elder brother, his sister, Margaret of Valois, the princes of the blood, the ministers of state, and the great officers of the crown. The leading orator of the Catholics was the Cardinal of Lorraine, assisted by five cardinals and forty bishops ; Theodore Beza was the spokesman of the Protestants, and he was accompanied by twelve Huguenot preachers. The Chancellor De L'Hôpital opened the debates in a conciliatory speech, which breathed the spirit of a politician, rather than that of a theologian ; for, looking mainly at the peace of the country, he advised the Catholics to make concessions to their opponents. This recommendation highly displeased several of the bishops, who demanded that the chancellor should pronounce his confession of faith, for he had long been suspected, if not of heresy, at least of religious indifference. This demand, however, was overruled, and Theodore Beza was called on to state his opinions.

Before noticing his address, it is advisable to state what were the points in controversy. They were reduced to two ; first, whether the Catholic

¹ *Esprit de la Ligue*, tom. i. p. 88.

apostolic church was the only true church, for had that assumption been admitted, the reformers must have been silenced, and if they denied it, they exposed themselves to the charge of being schismatics. The second turned on the doctrine of the eucharist, which admitted of three interpretations. The first is that professed by the church of Rome, which holds that after the consecration of the bread and wine, used in the sacrament of the holy supper, they are literally and absolutely transmuted into the veritable body and blood of Christ. This is called **TRANSUBSTANTIATION**. The second is that of Luther, who maintained that the bread and wine, after consecration, still remained in their natural state, but become blended with the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and this he termed **CONSUBSTANTIATION**. The third is that of Calvin, who denied both transubstantiation and consubstantiation, contending that the sacramental elements were merely symbols, and that Jesus Christ was only present in the eucharist through faith.

Theodore Beza stepped forward into the middle of the hall, knelt down, and prayed to God to enlighten his mind, and inspire him with truth. He then professed his faith, and adduced numerous arguments to disprove the pretensions of the Catholics, who affirmed that their church alone was the true church. He was listened to with the deepest attention, till he expressed his sentiments on the doctrine of the eucharist. He had already stated in a letter to Calvin, that Jesus Christ was *no more in the sacrament than in the mud*, "*non magis in cœnâ quam in cœno*," and the coarseness of this expression

had already given great offence. At the colloquy he varied the phrase, saying that Jesus Christ was as far from the sacramental elements, as the highest heavens were from the earth. This reminded the audience of his former language, and the Catholic benches put him down with vociferous clamour.

The Cardinal de Tournon, one of the bitterest opponents of the reformers, suddenly started from his seat, and after declaring that he entirely disapproved of the colloquy, and only had sanctioned it in deference to the wish of Catharine, exhorted the young king not to be led astray by the impetuous eloquence of Beza, but to suspend his judgment till he had heard the reply of the Catholic divines. He further pointed out the impropriety of the youthful monarch's attendance during the debates, as they involved questions above the capacity of his tender age : this last hint was taken and acted upon, for the king was never afterwards present.

Beza was answered with great astuteness and erudition by the Cardinal of Lorraine, who was greeted with loud applause. When he had ceased speaking, the cardinals and bishops formed a circle round him, and declared that he had expounded the true Catholic faith, for which they were all ready to suffer martyrdom. Beza demanded to reply, but, as the hour was late, the conference was adjourned.

When the disputants next assembled, they respectively adduced every possible argument for and against the unity and infallibility of the Romish

¹ Bossuet, *Hist. des Variations*, tom. i. p. 65.

church, and each party deemed itself victorious. It was on the doctrine of the eucharist that the Cardinal of Lorraine was most anxious to entrap Beza, for, if he succeeded in drawing a reply from him which denied the interpretation of Luther, then he hoped to destroy all sympathy between the Huguenots of France and the Protestants of Germany, and thus, in case of a religious war, to deprive the former of the military aid of the latter; but Beza was as wary as his subtle antagonist. One day, after a long altercation, the cardinal finished with this question: "Do you admit consubstantiation, as the Lutherans of Germany admit it?" to which Theodore answered, "Do you reject transubstantiation, as the Lutherans of Germany reject it?" When matters came to this crisis, when fair argument was thrown aside, and each party tried to outwit the other, it became necessary to terminate the conference; it was accordingly dissolved, and the disputed points of doctrine remained just as they stood before the discussion commenced.

The only remarkable circumstance which resulted from the colloquy of Poissy was the real, or pretended, conversion of the King of Navarre, who, shortly afterwards, joined the triumvirate, and in the excess of his newly acquired zeal, became one of the most bitter persecutors of the Huguenots. Many temptations were thrown in his way. The pope offered to dissolve his marriage with Jane D'Albret, on the plea of her being a heretic, and the Guises offered him the hand of their niece, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, with her prospective claims on the crown of England. This overture he rejected,

as well as a marriage with Margaret of Valois, though pressed upon him by her mother, Queen Catharine. He, however, yielded to a promise of Sardinia, as an indemnification for that part of Navarre of which the King of Spain had deprived him. From that hour to his death he proved one of the most remorseless enemies of the reformers.

The complete failure of the colloquy of Poissy to produce any of the effects contemplated by the leaders of the two parties, led to the convocation of another assembly at Saint-Germain. This measure was strongly recommended to Catharine by De l'Hôpital, and the opening speech of the chancellor showed his anxiety to make all points of theology subservient to the vital interests of political government. "The object of your deliberations," said De l'Hôpital, on addressing the audience, "is clear and simple. Is it advantageous, in the existing state of affairs, to tolerate or to forbid the meetings of the Calvinists for the exercise of their devotions? That is the single question you have to decide. To come to a right conclusion, you must keep out of view whatever relates to creed, doctrine, or religious discipline. Even let it be assumed that Calvinism is one continuous error of judgment, is that a reason to justify the proscription of those French subjects who have embraced it? Can a man not be good citizen, without being a Catholic? Do not, then, waste your time, or entangle yourselves in fruitless controversy, in the vain attempt at deciding which is the true religion. We are not here to establish a mode of faith, but a rule of government."

The chancellor having dexterously narrowed the discussion into this limited compass, the triumph of the Calvinists was certain, for had the Duke of Guise affirmed that none but a Catholic could be a good subject, the Prince of Condé would have resented it, as a personal affront, and demanded satisfaction at the point of the sword. The Catholics were thus compelled to make concessions, or raise the standard of civil war, an extremity for which they were not prepared. The assembly of Saint-Germain passed an edict, called the Edict of January, 1563, by which many of the disabilities of the Calvinists were removed. They were permitted to meet unarmed without the walls of cities and towns, and the local magistrates were commanded to afford them protection; and though prohibited from levying money to pay their preachers, they were allowed to receive any sum freely offered by voluntary contribution. In return for these concessions, the Huguenots were bound to restore all images and reliques of saints which they had seized, and to pay tithe and other ecclesiastical dues, and their preachers were commanded to abstain from all invectives against the ceremony of the mass. The Calvinists were grateful and satisfied; the Catholics sullen and discontented; the temporary calm was only the harbinger of a most fearful storm.

When Philip of Spain received intelligence of this act of toleration, he wrote to the pope, to the King of Navarre, to Catharine, and all the Catholic leaders, expressing the poignant grief he felt at the concessions made to the heretics. He exhorted them to take up arms and crush the reformers by a single

blow, offering to furnish men and money to carry his sanguinary proposals into execution. The King of Navarre, anxious to win the favour of Philip, without whose consent all his prospects on Sardinia would have been hopeless, urgently pressed the queen-mother to banish the Colignys from the court; for she, pursuing her constant policy of attempting to balance the two parties in the state, had warmly attached herself to the family of the Chatillons when the King of Navarre coalesced with the triumvirate. Catharine, however, consented to this request, on condition that the Cardinal of Lorraine, the Duke of Guise, and the Marshal Saint André, retired to their estates. These terms were accepted, for the Catholic leaders were well pleased to remove their rivals from the court, knowing that their own personal interests might be safely trusted to Montmorenci and the King of Navarre, both of whom were to continue at the seat of government. The royal family were then sojourning at Monceaux, near to Meaux. When the Prince of Condé heard that his enemies had retired, he travelled to Paris, hoping to make himself master of the capital. The King of Navarre, alarmed at his presence, but not daring to oppose him single-handed, wrote to the Duke of Guise to join him with his troops. The summons was instantly obeyed, but when the duke arrived at Vossi, a small town in Champagne, his followers came to blows with a party of Huguenots who were attending divine service in a barn. In the skirmish the duke was wounded, and the sight of his blood maddened his friends to fury: they massacred the Calvinists without distinction of age

or sex, destroyed the desk of the minister, burned his books, and only ceased from violence, when the field was covered with the dead and the wounded.

The Duke of Guise was guiltless of this fearful slaughter, and protested his innocence on his death-bed: no doubt the quarrel originated from some very trifling cause, but it laid the foundation of a civil war.¹ The Calvinists presented their complaints to Catharine, who promised them redress, but the King of Navarre branded them as factious heretics. It was on this occasion that Theodore Beza indignantly answered him, "Sire, I speak on behalf of a religion which pardons injuries, instead of resenting them; but remember it is an anvil which has blunted many hammers."

The queen wrote to the Duke of Guise, imploring him to suspend his journey to Paris, but he drily answered that he could not abandon his friends. He advanced, and Condé retired, for the contest was unequal, as the great bulk of the Parisians were attached to the ancient religion. The prince hastened to Meaux to muster his forces, and sent word to the admiral and D'Andelot to join him without delay. "Cesar has not only passed the Rubicon," wrote Condé to his two friends, "he has already

¹ Davila says that the Duke of Guise reproached the chief officer of Vossi for allowing this open preaching, who pleaded the edict of January in his justification; whereupon, the duke laid his hand on his sword, and angrily replied, "This sword shall cut the bond of that edict, though ever so binding." This rash language, uttered in a moment of hasty passion, made many believe that he was the instigator of the civil war. p. 57.

seized Rome, and his banners will soon be displayed over the country."

Emboldened by their success, the triumvirs rejected all overtures of parley or compromise, and determined to strike a vigorous blow at the authority of Catharine herself. The possession of the king's person was the grand object of their policy, and they succeeded in the daring attempt, heedless of the prayer and menaces of the queen. They conducted Charles IX. to Paris, where he was received with the liveliest demonstrations of joy, and Montmorenci displayed his zeal, on the evening the youthful monarch arrived, by plundering the Calvinist chapels, destroying the books, and making bonfires of the reading-desks of the preachers. The fanatical violence with which he sought after and destroyed the desks, gained him the name of *Capitaine Brule-Bancs*.

Catharine had accompanied her son, but she felt that the substance of power had passed from her hands, and anxious to humble the Guises, she wrote to the Prince of Condé, imploring him to save the mother and the child. The prince eagerly responded to the call, and in his manifestoes he besought the Calvinists to attack their common enemy, and all true Frenchmen, without distinctions of religion, to take up arms for the liberation of their captive sovereign. The Guises, however, prevailed on the young king to sign and publish an official denial of the charges of the Prince of Condé, declaring that both himself and his mother enjoyed perfect freedom.¹ Such was

¹ "It is most certain," says Davila, "that the young king

the equivocation, subterfuge, and notorious bad faith of the triumvirate, that the governors of provinces knew not whether they ought, or ought not, to act on the instructions they received, for the orders brought by one courier were contradicted by others, and the dates purposely falsified to throw any odium that might arise on the subordinate departments of the executive. Historians, living at the time, and well informed of the facts, have asserted that Montluc, Bishop of Valence, the confidential adviser of Catharine, composed her manifestoes to the Calvinists, and also her own refutations of their contents.

The Prince of Condé seized on Orleans, which became the head-quarters of the Huguenot forces, and he opened negotiations with Elizabeth, Queen of England, and the Protestant princes of Germany, to supply him with money, troops, and ammunition. The Guises received assistance from the King of Spain, the pope, Cosmo, Duke of Florence, and the republic of Venice, and, at the head of ten thousand men, marched against Orleans, within whose walls the Chatillons, La Rouchefoucauld, Rohan, Genlis, Grammont, and other Calvinist leaders, were assembled.

was seen by many that day to weep, being persuaded that the Catholic lords had restrained his personal liberty; and that the queen-mother, being discontented that her wonted arts had not prevailed, and foreseeing the mischiefs of the future war, seemed perplexed in mind, and spoke not a word to anybody; of which the Duke of Guise, making little account, was heard to say publicly, "That the good is always good, whether it proceeds from love or force."

The queen-mother dreaded a hostile encounter, for if either party had gained a decisive victory, her influence must have been diminished. She therefore adopted her usual plan of negociation; and a conference was held at Talsy, a small village between Orleans and Châteaudun. The King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé represented their respective parties, and Montluc, Bishop of Valence, acted for the queen. "Her majesty," said Montluc to the prince, "wishes to oblige you, but you know that the delicacy of her position is such, that she cannot render you the services she could wish, unless you make some appearance of concession. With a view therefore, to the re-establishment of public tranquility, do you propose to quit the country with your friends, on condition that the triumvirs quit the court. They will certainly refuse, and you will have the merit of having made a patriotic offer; this will enable the queen openly to espouse your cause, and all the odium of the civil war will rest with your enemies."

Condé, unsuspecting of the treachery of Montluc, fell into the snare, and proposed the expatriation of his whole party in the terms recommended by the Bishop of Valence. Catharine warmly applauded his disinterestedness; and then, addressing the members of the council, said, "Since our misfortunes have reached to such a pitch that they can only be put an end to by so singular a remedy, I accept your offer of quitting the kingdom. It will only be for a short time, and, in the interval, all angry feelings will subside. I by no means abandon my claims on your services,

and should any malcontents disturb the government, during your absence, I flatter myself that you will return and protect the state. Let us now confine ourselves to this preliminary arrangement, as the basis of our negociation ; to-morrow we will settle all minor points.

The prince and his associates were thunderstruck at this unexpected conclusion, for not even the remotest allusion was made to the retirement of the triumvirs from court. His troops were indignant: the preachers exclaimed against the duplicity of Montluc: the nobles protested against the validity of the promise, which, if performed, would entail ruin on themselves and their families. On the following day Condé again attended the conference, declared that he had been deceived,—retracted his engagement, and, mounting his horse, bid a fierce defiance to his enemies. Civil war instantly commenced, and both parties disgraced themselves by perpetrating the most remorseless acts of murder, torture, and incendiarism. To detail the various skirmishes which steeped all the provinces in blood, to enumerate the villages plundered, and record the deeds of cruelty committed by individual leaders of small armed bands, would occupy volumes, and they would form a narrative of crime, hideously diversified in its features, from which humanity would recoil ; it will be sufficient to note those principal battles which were attended with political results.

The Prince of Condé concluded a treaty with Elizabeth of England, by which he covenanted to place in her hands Havre de Grace, on condition

that she furnished him with one hundred thousand crowns, and garrisoned that town, Dieppe, and Rouen, with six thousand men. These proposals were accepted by the queen, who viewed the possession of Havre as an indemnification for the loss of Calais, and it was her decided interest to support the Huguenots, as their triumph would tend to suppress the insurrectionary hopes of her own Catholic subjects. This arrangement determined the movements of the royal army, which abandoned the intended attack on Orleans, to carry the war into Normandy, for it was apprehended that the English would fortify themselves in Havre, and having the facility of throwing reinforcements into it from the sea, render that important maritime town a permanent conquest. It was accordingly resolved that the King of Navarre should lead his troops against Rouen, where Montgommeri commanded,—the same officer who had accidentally slain Henry the Second in a tournament.

The garrison of Rouen consisted of two thousand English and twelve hundred French foot, and four troops of cavalry; and the city was defended by a fort erected on Mount Sainte Catharine. The besieged were guilty of such gross negligence that this fort was soon and easily taken by surprise, and its cannon, directed against the walls of the town, made a breach practicable. Montgommeri, fearing to be overpowered by numbers, invited the English, quartered at Havre, to come to his assistance. They descended the Seine in the night, but an Italian engineer, Bartolomeo Campi, sunk vessels

laden with stones, and fastened to each other with chains, in the bed of the river. The passage of the English was thus obstructed, and only three galleys, having on board seven hundred men, succeeded in reaching Rouen. At the end of a month the city was carried by assault, and plundered during forty-eight hours. The King of Navarre received a musket-shot in the left shoulder, which proved mortal, and Montgommeri made his escape into England with his wife and children.¹

While Rouen was being besieged, the Prince of Condé remained in Orleans, waiting the arrival of D'Andelot with a body of German auxiliaries, who at length reached the head-quarters of the Calvinists, after weary marches, constantly harassed by the

¹ During the siege of Rouen, an officer of the garrison, named Francis Civil, while standing on the rampart, was struck by a bullet in the face: he fell, and being supposed dead, he was buried. His servant, on hearing the fate of his master, begged to be shown the place in which he was interred, that he might carry the body to the relations of the deceased. Montgommeri himself led him to the spot; the servant disinterred all the corpses which had been deposited in the same pit, and examined them one by one, but he could not recognize that of his master. Disconsolate at his failure, he again replaced the bodies, and covered them with earth, and, having retired some paces, turned to take a farewell gaze of the spot, when he saw a hand above the sod, which he had not wholly concealed; a feeling of humanity induced him to retrace his steps, that he might give the body all the rites of sepulture in his power, when, to his surprise, he saw the diamond ring of Civil, glittering on the finger of the exposed hand. He at once took up the corpse, and feeling some warmth in it, placed it on his shoulders, and carried it to the hospital. The surgeons, fully occupied with the wounded, refused to attend to a man whose case seemed entirely

Catholics during their route. Thus reinforced Condé advanced to the environs of Paris, and attacked the suburbs, but without success. He then retreated into Normandy, where he was met by the royalists at Dreux, a town on the frontiers of Normandy, twenty-six leagues from Paris, and watered by the river Eure. Here the two armies engaged in battle, which lasted seven hours, and the contest was sustained with equal courage on both sides : in this desperate conflict Marshal Saint André was slain, and Condé and Montmorenci, who respectively commanded the Calvinists and the royalists, were taken prisoners.¹

The death of the marshal and the captivity of the constable opened to the ambition of the Duke of Guise the full and undivided powers of a dictatorship. He stood alone, the recognized chief of his party, without an equal, without a rival, with the whole Catholic population at his back. Admiral

hopeless. The servant then carried his master to a public-house, dressed the wound, poured some cordial down his throat, which animated him, and, after a few days, he had the happiness to perceive that he was recognized. During this time the city was captured and set on fire. Some Catholic soldiers entered the public-house in which Civil was lodged, seized the dying man, and threw him out of the window ; fortunately he fell on a heap of dung, and there remained three days without food. At length his brother contrived to carry the body out of Rouen ; Civil received medical aid and recovered ; “ and after so many deaths,” says De Thou, who relates this extraordinary adventure, “ he is now living while I write this account, forty years after the event.

¹ It may be remarked as one of the curious features of this age, that the Prince of Condé, now prisoner to the Duke of Guise, slept with him in the same bed.—*Davila*, p. 84.

Coligny had collected the dispersed battalions, which had been vanquished at Dreux, and led them to Orleans, which the Duke of Guise at once besieged. The city was attacked and defended with skill and courage, and while its fate was still uncertain, a Calvinist gentleman, named Poltrot,¹ entered the camp of the Catholics, and assassinated the Duke of Guise. Bossuet accuses Coligny and Beza of having instigated this fanatic to perpetrate the murder; but the charge, thus preferred, is only deduced from inferences, which Bossuet has twisted so as to give a colour of truth to a fact he was so anxious to establish;² but all impartial historians have acquitted them of any participation in so odious a crime. It is true that many of the Huguenots approved of the deed, for, in that age of religious bigotry, to slay those who professed an opposite creed was lauded as an act of piety.³ Henry de Guise

¹ John Poltrot, Sieur de Mereborne, was descended from a noble family of Angoulême. He had lived many years in Spain, but was converted to Calvinism while living at Geneva. Poltrot pretended to have returned to the Catholic faith, and on the evening of the 24th of February, 1563, he lay in wait for the Duke of Guise, about a league from the trenches of Orleans, mounted on a swift horse. The duke, who was unarmed, came leisurely along the road, conversing with Tristan Rostine, a servant of the queen's, when the assassin discharged a gun at him, loaded with three bullets, which all took effect on the right shoulder, and passing through the body, stretched Guise on the ground. He survived but a few days. Poltrot was arrested by some Swiss soldiers on the bridge of Olivette: he confessed his guilt, was put to the torture, and afterwards quartered.—*Davila*, p. 87.

² *Hist. des Variations*, tom. ii. p. 131, et seq.

³ In the following year a conspiracy was discovered at Rome,

always persisted in charging Coligny with the murder of his father; and, young as he then was, he swore against him an unrelenting hatred, which only ceased with one of the most bloody catastrophes recorded by history.

On the death of the Duke of Guise, the state of political parties assumed an entirely new aspect, and Catharine hoped that peace might be restored. Both the Princes of Condé and Montmorenci eagerly desired their freedom, and their friends aided the wish of the queen-mother, in order that their captivity might end with the termination of hostilities. The inflexible spirit of Coligny and D'Andelot alone threatened to protract the war, for they were too sincere in their principles, and too resolute in character, to sacrifice any advantages they might secure for their party, for the sake of liberating the Prince of Condé, whom they nevertheless highly esteemed; but their personal friendship was as dust in the balance compared with their zeal for religious liberty. They were still enclosed within the walls of Orleans, and their absence from the

which shows to what extent fanaticism was carried in those days. Count Antony Canossa and five others, his associates, all persons of rank, were deluded by presumed divine revelations, purporting that the successor of Pius IV. would become monarch of the whole earth, and that under his reign the Roman Catholic religion would become universal. In order to hasten this event, these visionaries conspired to murder the pope, fully persuaded that each would obtain a principality. They were arrested and put to the torture, and being interrogated separately, all gave the same answer, to the effect that the only inducement to the conspiracy was the desire of seeing one religion under a pope, who would be sovereign of the universe. They made no other disclosure whatever.—*Condillac*, tom. xiii. p. 148.

court rendered any resistance on their part to the general pacification ineffectual; Catharine availed herself of their position, and the Convention of Amboise was signed on the 19th of March, 1563.

The edict of July, 1562, permitted the Calvinists to assemble for the exercise of their religion in all parts of the kingdom, provided they met outside the walls of towns. The convention of Amboise granted the same privilege in the towns possessed by the Huguenots, up to the date of the 7th of May, 1563. The general permission to preach all over the country, granted by the edict of January, was, however, restricted by the following limitations. The lords high justiciaries could only assemble their tenants and neighbours on the demesnes of their seignories; the nobles were only allowed to hear the preachers in their own houses, and even that indulgence was withheld, if the house was in a town over which a Catholic lord exercised judicial power. As some compensation for these restrictions, in every bailiwick, immediately dependent on any of the parliaments, a town was specially named in which the Calvinists were permitted the full and free exercise of their religion. The convention of Amboise contained no clause of censure, but buried the past in oblivion: it declared that the Prince of Condé and his adherents were good and faithful subjects, and that they had taken up arms for the service of the crown.¹

When Coligny heard that peace was signed, he became furious with rage, declaring that a stroke of

¹ *Esprit de la Ligue*, tom. i. p. 150.

the pen had done more harm to Calvinism than could have been caused by ten years of civil war. He was compelled, however, to submit and disband his army. Orleans was garrisoned by the royal troops, and Lyons, one of the strongholds of the Huguenots, was placed under the control of the crown. The famous Baron Des Adrets had commanded in that city, from which he ruled with the sway of a monarch over the extreme south of France, and even terrified Rome with threats of invasion. His courage and cruelty, and the good fortune that attended his arms, rendered him most formidable to the Catholics, but so merciless was his character, that only one act of humanity is recorded to his honour. Whenever Des Adrets carried a town by assault, he made his prisoners leap from the walls into the trenches: on one occasion, a victim approached twice to the edge of the parapet, but shrunk back. "Twice is too much," said Des Adrets, sternly. "I will bet that you do not do it in ten times," retorted the prisoner. The tyrant smiled at the rebuke, and spared the man's life. The civil war being terminated, the continuance of the English auxiliaries in Normandy was no longer required, and Condé and Montmorenci attacked them in Havre. Out of six thousand men who had landed in France, four thousand five hundred had perished by an epidemic, and the remainder were too enfeebled to resist the assault of the royal army. The Earl of Warwick, who commanded the garrison, capitulated on the 17th of July, 1563, undertaking to deliver up Havre de Grace into the hands of the constable for the use of

the most Christian king, with all the artillery and ammunition belonging to the French, and all the ships and merchandize taken or seized since the commencement of hostilities. It was further stipulated that all the prisoners on both sides should be set at liberty without ransom, and that the English, within six days, should transport their arms and baggage on board their ships without molestation. This agreement was scarcely signed, before an English fleet of sixty sail were seen steering for the harbour, with a favourable wind; but the Earl of Warwick, feeling himself bound in honour to execute the capitulation, sent a message to the admiral, that the town had surrendered.¹ Coligny and D'Andelot took no part in the expulsion of the English.

Catharine availed herself of the interval of repose that followed these events to vest the full functions of royalty in Charles IX. whose majority she caused to be proclaimed at Rouen by the parliament of Normandy. This measure displeased Condé, Montmorenci, Coligny, and all the other leading men who aspired to govern; but though the king was only fourteen years of age, it was a prudent step, as it crushed the schemes of many factions, and had a tendency to rally all ranks round a legitimate master.

The calm, however, was deceitful, and the elements of discord were soon kindled into fresh activity. A church which declares itself infallible, and pronounces all doctrines false, except those

¹ Davilla, p. 90.

contained in its own exclusive creed, cannot with consistency tolerate any other opinions: such unfortunately is the characteristic of the church of Rome, and this peculiar and intolerant dogma rendered permanent tranquillity impossible. When the commissioners, appointed to carry into execution the convention of Amboise, arrived in the different provinces, to mark the towns in which the Calvinist ministers might preach, and fix the limits of the rural districts, they met with great annoyance from both parties, the Catholics insisting on many restrictions,—the Huguenots claiming even more than the law entitled them to demand. Thus embarrassed, the commissioners applied to the court for fresh instructions, on which Catharine put a strained interpretation on the convention of Amboise, the whole of which was pointedly unfavourable to the Calvinists. Condé wrote a letter of remonstrance to the king, but it produced no effect; and the prince satisfied himself with this slight effort, for he was now devoted to pleasure, and he sacrificed his honour to the intriguing females of the court. But the Catholic nobles did not thus betray their party; they supported their complaints, however frivolous, with the full weight of their influence; and Montmorenci even devised a plot for massacring the reformers of Paris, which he would have executed, had not the queen interposed her authority. His son, Damville, who commanded in Languedoc, and Tavannes, the governor of Burgundy, distinguished themselves as persecutors of the Calvinists, while the thunders of the Vatican were vigorously launched against the reputed heretics.

Within the bosom of the Gallican church itself a schism had arisen, not precisely in reference to doctrine, but rather in reference to discipline. Odet de Coligny, Bishop of Beauvais and Cardinal Châtillon, had married a Norman lady, with whom he lived openly, and she assumed the title of Countess of Beauvais. This was a direct infraction of the celibacy imposed on all priests, and the cardinal was cited to Rome. Nor was his a solitary case. Saint-Romain, Archbishop of Aix; Montluc, Bishop of Valence; Carraccioli, of Troyes; Barbançon, of Pamiers; and Guillart, of Chartres, were also summoned to appear before the pontiff and profess their faith. Had the pope limited his citations to these individuals, the probability is that they would have been abandoned by the court; but his holiness extended his authority to Jane D'Albret, Queen of Navarre, whom he threatened to proscribe, unless she appeared at Rome within six months. This was an attack on the dignity of the crown itself, Jane being of the blood-royal, and Charles IX. indignantly remonstrated with the legate on this insult to his family, on which the papal bull was recalled, and all the parties inculpated thus escaped the ecclesiastical censures with which they were menaced.

Catharine now resolved to conduct the king through the provinces, that he might see his people, and ascertain the strength of parties and the feelings of the inhabitants. The court travelled as a party of pleasure, very few soldiers constituting the royal escort; but a subtle and cruel policy lurked under this semblance of gaiety and confidence. The province of Burgundy was decidedly Calvinistic, and when

the king arrived there, he ordered numerous strong castles to be razed to the ground. At Roussillon he passed a new edict, qualifying the convention of Amboise: it enacted that no gentleman should allow preaching on his estate, if others than his own family and servants attended; it prohibited all collections of money, even for the maintenance of the ministers, and commanded all priests, if married, to put away their wives or quit the kingdom. In Provence and Languedoc the king pointed with horror at the dilapidated churches and broken images of the saints, expressing his high displeasure at these proofs of Huguenot violence. Thus he proceeded on his journey, evincing his hatred of the Calvinists, till he reached Bayonne, the city in which he had appointed to meet his sister Elizabeth, married to Philip II. King of Spain.

Various opinions have been entertained of the true object of this celebrated interview. The Catholic historians affirm that it was a mere family visit, while the Calvinists insist that there was plotted the atrocious massacre of Saint Bartholomew. It is certain that the infamous Alvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alva, celebrated for his atrocities in the Low Countries, and for the most ferocious bigotry, represented the King of Spain on this occasion, and the young Prince of Bearn, afterwards Henry IV. of France, who had accompanied the royal party, has distinctly recorded that many conversations passed on the subject of the religious discords which distracted the kingdom.¹ Catharine herself wished to maintain

¹ The Prince of Navarre, being then a child, and almost continually with Catharine of Medicis, heard something of the plot

tranquillity, by reconciling the chiefs of the two factions; but the Duke of Alva entirely disapproved of this policy, insisting that there should be only one faith and one party. "Ten thousand frogs," he said, "are not worth the head of a salmon;" a sentiment breathing extermination, and one which Catharine afterwards turned to fearful account.¹

The royal journey ended, an assembly was convened at Moulins, at the commencement of the year 1566. The princes of the blood, the cardinals, the bishops, the knights of the several orders, the prime nobility, and the leading men of the different parliaments, were ordered to attend. The king declared that his sole object in visiting the provinces had been personally to hear the petitions of his subjects, to learn on the spot the causes of local grievances, and collect such general information as would enable the council of state to establish permanent tranquillity throughout the kingdom. He then implored all

to exterminate all the heads of the Protestant party. He gave notice of it to the queen his mother, and she to the Prince of Condé and the admiral; the rage this inspired them with led to the enterprize at Meaux.—*Mathieu, Hist. de France*, tom. i. p. 283.

¹ According to Davila, the Duke of Alva thus expressed himself: "That a prince could not do anything more unworthy or prejudicial to his interests, than to permit a liberty of conscience to his people, bringing as many varieties of religion into a state as there are capricious fancies in the restless minds of men, and opening a door to let in discord and confusion, mortal accidents for the ruin of a state: that as the controversies of religion had always served as an argument or pretence for the insurrections of the malcontents, it was necessary at the first dash to remove this cover, and afterwards by severe remedies, no matter whether by fire or sword, to cut away the roots of that evil, which, by mildness or sufferance, perniciously springing up, still spread itself and increased."

present to aid him by their advice, to bury their private quarrels in oblivion, and unite together for the general welfare of the nation. The chancellor, De l'Hôpital, enlarged on the royal speech, and proposed measures of singular prudence and rare sagacity, which formed the basis of the celebrated edict of Moulins—an edict which settled a very great number of controverted points of jurisprudence. In reference to the disputes of religion, it was simply ordered that all former laws should be solemnly confirmed.

Had there been any sincerity in the professions of Charles, or had honesty swayed the counsels of his advisers, the privileges and disabilities of the Calvinists would have been clearly and fundamentally fixed at this meeting; but though there was a general ratification of former edicts, all of which had been distorted by unfair constructions put on their most important clauses, yet it was so loosely worded as to leave all the main principles in confusion and incertitude. In fact, the court had no intention to establish any definitive settlement of the points at issue; on the contrary, it was their wish to leave matters in such a fluctuating and doubtful state, as to render the constant interference of the royal council necessary, and by this means it was hoped gradually to fritter away all the protective securities of religious liberty. They were anxious, however, to reconcile the leaders of the two parties, particularly the Guises and the Châtillons, and in this they ostensibly succeeded. The Prince of Condé pledged his honour that the admiral was guiltless of the murder of the Duke of Guise at Orleans, and Coligny

himself denied the charge on oath. The king, thereupon, decided that the widow of the deceased and the Cardinal of Lorraine should be satisfied with these declarations, and the parties embraced, vowing to each other a hollow friendship, while the young Henry de Guise, by his cold and haughty demeanour, showed that he was no party to the pretended reconciliation.¹

When the assembly at Moulins was dissolved, the king desired all the nobles to return to their estates, for he feared that fresh quarrels might arise unless they were separated. He only retained at court the Cardinal of Lorraine and Marshal Montmorenci, son of the constable, and, as they uniformly opposed each other on all matters of state, and broke out into the most angry recriminations when the king was not present to restrain their violence, it was arranged that whenever his majesty was absent, his brother, the Duke of Anjou, should preside at the council. Catharine dexterously availed herself of the name of this young prince to defeat many applications which it was difficult to refuse and still more hazardous to grant. Thus when Condé demanded the office of lieutenant-general of the kingdom, vacant since the death of his brother, the King of Navarre, the queen replied that it had been promised to the Duke of

¹ The Duke of Aumale, on arriving at the court, refused to meet the admiral or any of his family. On the contrary, in the queen's presence, he said, referring to a charge preferred against him by the admiral, of having hired an assassin to kill him, that he should consider it a great happiness to be shut up with him in a chamber, that he might, hand to hand, let him know he had no need of help, but that he was quite able to determine his own quarrel himself.—*Davila*, p. 98.

Anjou; and when Montmorenci requested that his son, the marshal, should succeed him in the constablership, she observed that the constablership would be abolished as soon as the Duke of Anjou was appointed lieutenant-general.

Catharine was occasionally indulgent to the Calvinists, and her indulgence to the Cardinal of Châtillon was carried to an extent which drew down upon her the most bitter reproaches. The life of that prelate was a perpetual scandal to the church, and his marriage a daring violation of ecclesiastical law. His enemies insisted on his deposition. Catharine steered a middle course. She allowed him to retain all his episcopal revenues and patronage, on his dropping the titles of Cardinal and Bishop of Beauvais.

The queen-mother had great difficulty in restraining the bigotry of the king, whose hatred of Calvinism was only equalled by his dissimulation; for, though yet a mere youth, he masked his real opinions with a wiliness and duplicity that deceived the oldest and craftiest of the courtiers. Every fresh demand of the Huguenots for an extension of their privileges, or for the protection of those already conceded to them, roused his choler and filled him with vexation. One day he broke out in great anger against Admiral Coligny: "It is not long since," said he, "that you were satisfied with being merely tolerated by the Catholics; now you claim to be their equals, presently you will wish to be supreme." The habitual prudence of the admiral kept him silent. Charles left him abruptly, and rushing into the apartment of the chancellor, exclaimed, "The Duke of

Alva was right : heads so high are dangerous to a state : tact and skill are useless, for they may be parried by the same weapons ; we can only keep our ascendancy by force."

When the ambassadors of the Protestant princes of Germany waited on the king, beseeching him to protect the French Calvinists, his displeasure was excited to fury. "I will willingly maintain amicable relations with your princes," said he, "so long as they interfere with my affairs as little as I do with theirs;" and, after a moment's silence, he scornfully added, "Since you ask me to tolerate the new doctrines in all the towns of France, may I ask your princes to tolerate the mass in all the towns of Germany?"¹

Charles IX. now resolved to put down the Huguenots by the sword, and he only wanted a plausible pretext to increase his army. To have adopted such a measure without being able to assign some valid reason, would have excited suspicion and defeated his views ; but he adroitly availed himself of an opportunity which effectually deceived the Calvinist leaders. The King of Spain, determined on prosecuting the war in the Low Countries, designed, at the commencement of the year 1567, to march an army, under the conduct of the Duke of Alva, by the route of Savoy and the mountain-chain of Lorraine, skirting the frontier of France. Catharine pretended great alarm at this expedition, avowing her fears lest the country should be invaded by the Spaniards ; and to avert this danger it was proposed to augment the army, and take six thousand

¹ Davila, p. 105.

Swiss into the pay of France. All parties eagerly supported these views, as the honour of the nation was at stake, and the Prince of Condé and his friends were among the foremost to tender their services, offering to arm all the Huguenots. Their offers, however, were rejected, for obvious reasons; nor were the Calvinist leaders entrusted with any of the commands to which their rank and experience gave them a just title. Every station of trust or responsibility was exclusively bestowed on Catholic officers.

In a short time the Duke of Alva advanced with his forces, but, far from being opposed by the French, he received from them the most abundant supplies of provisions. This conduct on the part of the government at once revealed the secret object of their policy, and the Calvinists held a secret council at Châtillon-sur-Loing, the residence of the admiral, where they determined to foil stratagem by stratagem, and resist force by force. They had ascertained the designs of their enemies, who had resolved to imprison the Prince of Condé for life, and put the admiral to death; to distribute the six thousand Swiss in equal numbers in the garrisons of Paris, Orleans, and Poitiers, to revoke all edicts of pacification or toleration, and rigorously to prohibit the exercise of the reformed opinions.

The court were sojourning at Monceaux, in Brie, in a residence perfectly open, and which offered no protection against any attack. They soon received intelligence that small parties of armed men were collecting in the provinces, and justly suspecting that their schemes were discovered, they removed to

Meaux for greater security. Castelnau, an able diplomatist, was ordered to visit the admiral, and endeavour to penetrate his intentions; but the wary Huguenot was on his guard, and Castelnau reported that he had found him busily engaged in his vineyards. This was on the 26th of September, 1567, and on the 28th the whole of France was in a state of convulsion. A body of cavalry, entirely composed of gentlemen, and commanded by Condé, D'Andelot, and the Count de la Rochefoucauld, arrived at Rosay, a small town, distant four leagues from Meaux.

The court party were now placed in imminent danger, and the queen-mother was excessively alarmed lest the Calvinist leaders should seize the person of the young king: she insisted on summoning the six thousand Swiss to her aid, but was opposed by De l'Hôpital. The chancellor was overruled by the council, and a courier was dispatched to hasten the arrival of the mercenaries, who, by forced marches, reached Meaux in the evening of the 28th of September, without being attacked by the confederates. This reinforcement tranquillized the fears of Catharine; but a question still arose, whether the king should be escorted to Paris, or hazard the chance of being besieged in Meaux; and, after some discussion, and at the earnest entreaties of the Swiss, it was resolved to advance on the capital.

At midnight the drums beat to arms, the foreign auxiliaries were formed into a hollow square, in the centre of which the king rode on horseback. The Duke of Nevers, at the head of the royal guard, accompanied by all the courtiers, who had no other

weapons than their swords, preceded the Swiss. Scarcely had they advanced a league, ere they were attacked by the Prince of Condé, but the Swiss stood firm, and their compact ranks were never broken. The whole day was passed in mere skirmishes, and in the evening Charles reached Paris in safety, and the confederates encamped before the capital.

On the following morning the king issued a proclamation, in which he promised an amnesty to all who would lay down their arms within twenty-four hours, and repair to their homes; while those who persisted in their rebellion were menaced with capital punishment. The only answer of the Calvinists was an active blockade of the city: they destroyed the mills, made themselves masters of the rivers, and fortified all the castles which commanded the main roads. Nor did they confine themselves to military operations; they declared that their motive in taking up arms was not only to secure their religious rights, but to diminish the taxes, and maintain the general freedom of all classes, to effect which purposes they demanded the convocation of the states-general.

The head-quarters of the Prince of Condé were at Saint Denis, of which the Huguenots were in full possession. On the 7th of October deputies arrived in that town from the king, commanding them to lay down their arms, under the penalty of being punished at the royal discretion. This order was addressed nominatively to each of the known Calvinist leaders, that none might plead ignorance of its specific import. When the herald approached, Condé said to him in a loud and angry tone, "Beware of what you are about to do, for if your mes-

sage attacks my honour, I will hang you on the nearest tree." "I come," replied the herald, "from your master and mine, and no menace will prevent the faithful discharge of my duty." With these words he gave the summons to the prince, who answered that he would send his reply in three days. "It must be delivered within twenty hours," replied the herald, and retired.¹

The confederates were alarmed ; they saw that the king was firm, and that he would treat them as traitors to the crown, not as mere enemies to his ministers. Prudence induced them to qualify their demands, and a fresh negotiation was opened at La Capelle, a small village between Paris and Saint Denis, under the auspices of Anne de Montmorenci and the Prince of Condé. But this last attempt at reconciliation failed with the announcement of the first article in the terms of the proposed peace. The Calvinists demanded the general, public, and irrevocable exercise of their religion, as the basis of any arrangement : Montmorenci plainly and firmly refused any such concession : he went further, stating that the indulgences hitherto granted to the Huguenots were always intended to be temporary,—that the king now determined on their revocation, and that for the future he would only permit one form of worship, which would be that of the church of Rome. An open rupture thus became inevitable, and after much angry altercation between the uncle and the nephew, the conference was dissolved, and both parties prepared to try the fate of arms.

The army of the confederates had been strongly

¹ Davila, p. 114

reinforced since the occupation of Saint Denis, the preachers having used all their exertions in the different provinces to support their military leaders with volunteers; but still the royal forces were superior in number, particularly in cavalry. The emissaries of the Prince of Condé were raising levies in Germany, and their arrival was impatiently expected: this fact was known to the king and council, and it induced them at once to hazard a battle, before the enemy was strengthened by those auxiliaries. On the 10th of November, 1567, the hostile armies encountered each other on the plains of Saint Denis, and after a fierce and obstinate conflict, in which the royalists had the advantage in artillery and position, the Catholics remained masters of the field of battle. In this engagement the old constable was slain: he had received four wounds in the face, and a severe blow on the head from a battle-axe; yet he still fought bravely, and was endeavouring to rally his men, when Robert Stuart, a Scotchman, rode up to him and presented a pistol, on which Montmorenci exclaimed, "Do you not know me?" "It is *because* I know you," replied Stuart, "that I send you this," and instantly fired his pistol, when the shot took effect in the shoulder of the veteran general: he fell, but when falling threw his sword with such violence in the face of his enemy, that he beat out three of his teeth, and broke his jaw-bone.¹

The Huguenots rushed forward to seize the body of the constable; the royalists, however, rescued it,

¹ Davila, p. 117. It is a remarkable fact that Robert Stuart was the person who took Montmorenci prisoner at the battle of Dreux. Vide, notes to the *Henriade*.

and the old man was carried in a dying state to Paris, where he was personally visited by the king and queen—a flattering consolation to a courtier. After he had confessed, the priest importuned him with his exhortations, and roused his choler: “Leave me, holy father,” said Montmorenci: “it would be disgraceful if a man who has lived eighty years, was not prepared to die at a quarter of an hour’s notice.”¹

Though the battle of Saint Denis was not decisive, the advantage rested with the royalists: the Prince of Condé retreated, nor did he deem himself in safety till he had crossed the Meuse. His object was to form a junction with the German auxiliaries; and this was effected towards the close of December, 1567, when the allies, commanded by John Casimir, prince palatine, marched into the camp of the Calvinists. Their arrival, so long desired, was not unattended with serious inconvenience, for Condé had covenanted to pay them one hundred thousand crowns, and the military chest only contained two thousand. His own army served without pay: they had suffered severely in their retreat from Saint Denis in the most rigorous season of the year; their provisions had been scanty, and many were in want of shoes. To all these privations they had cheerfully submitted for conscience’ sake; but it was very doubtful whether they would extend their generosity so far as to dis-

¹ “Those who speak without passion of the constable,” says Davila, “give him three principal attributes; that he was a good soldier, a loving servant, but a bad friend; for in all his actions he was ever swayed by the consideration of his own interest.”—P. 117.

charge the claims of the Germans. It was necessary, however, to try the experiment, and it was successful. History records no circumstance more extraordinary, or which more deeply illustrates the influence of religious enthusiasm: it is true the full amount was not subscribed, but all was given that was possessed.¹ The auxiliaries were satisfied, and early in January, 1568, the confederates resolved to march against the capital: on their route they received considerable reinforcements, and twenty thousand men laid siege to Chartres, a town eighteen leagues distant from Paris.

So formidable a rebellion filled Catharine with alarm, and she resorted to her old policy of negotiation. This remarkable woman, whose ambition was only content with unlimited power, was now in full possession of all the authority she had coveted. Though the majority of the king had been recognized, he was too young to rule effectively in person, and the real government was vested in a council of ministers, all of whom were entirely devoted to the queen-mother. On the death of Montmorenci, the Duke of Anjou, a youth of sixteen, and second brother to the king, was placed at the head of the army, with the title of lieutenant-general of the kingdom; and of course the appointment to all military commands rested exclusively with Catharine. Thus she was all powerful in the cabinet and the camp, and displayed a masculine energy of action which animated her friends and astonished her enemies.

The brilliant army of the Calvinists failed before

¹ Davila says that this voluntary contribution amounted to thirty thousand crowns.

the walls of Chartres. Gold was largely distributed among the Germans, and the bribe was accepted. They deserted in great numbers. Many of the French, who had expected that the campaign would have finished with the surprise of Meaux, became discontented at the protracted hostilities, and returned to their homes. Catharine adroitly availed herself of this disunion, and printed copies of certain terms, said to have been offered by the king and rejected by the Prince of Condé, were circulated in the camp; the conditions were, the free exercise of the reformed religion, and the royal guarantee to pay the demands of the Germans. All these circumstances produced the desired effect; a treaty of peace was signed on the 23rd of March, which terminated the second war. The king granted a full pardon to all, received the leaders of the confederates into his favour, and promised faithfully to execute the edict of January, 1562.

Peace having been proclaimed, the armies were disbanded. Two difficulties, however, remained. It was prudent to rid the country of the Germans, but their arrears of pay amounted to a much larger sum than the treasury could disburse. An instalment was paid them, and a promise given that the balance would be remitted to them on their march; but the further they removed from the capital, the less anxiety was felt to fulfil the engagement. The mercenaries, finding themselves deceived, laid the unprotected country desolate, plundered all the property they could seize, and returned home laden with a rich booty. On the part of the Calvinists, and as a just measure of reciprocity, it was insisted

that the Spanish and Swiss auxiliaries should evacuate the kingdom ; but they remained, Catharine being only anxious for the departure of the Germans.

The distinction thus made between the foreign levies announced the insincerity and hollowness of the past negotiations. Distrust and suspicion arose. Every possible discourtesy was shown to the Calvinist leaders, while the people were exposed to an infinity of petty vexations. The Catholic pulpits resounded with invectives against the sectarians, with seditious reflections on the peace, and exhortations to break it. The clergy had become inoculated with the *virus* of jesuitism, and openly proclaimed that no faith ought to be kept with heretics, and that their massacre was just, pious, and conducive to salvation. These inflammatory harangues provoked tumults and occasioned frequent assassinations. The Calvinist writers affirm that, in the space of three months, ten thousand of their persuasion perished by poison, by the dagger, and the slow tortures of imprisonment ;—a calculation no doubt exaggerated, but when reduced within the bounds of reasonable probability, it is one which traces in characters of blood the desolating horrors of religious warfare.

The astucious policy of Catharine aided the frantic zeal of the priests and the Jesuits. Fearing lest any of her secret plans might reach the ears of Condé or Coligny, she constructed a council of state on an entirely new model, excluding many who had an official right to be present at its sittings. Among these was the Chancellor De l'Hôpital, whose virtue and equity had frequently thwarted

the exterminating proposals of the Princes of Lorraine. He was ordered to deliver up the seals, and banished to his estate. The effective powers of government were confided to a select few, and shrouded in mystery. A form of oath was transmitted to all the governors of provinces, by which they were bound not to recognize any order, unless the king's sign-manual was appended to it. In short, every possible measure was taken to render the next blow struck at the Calvinists decisive.

Catharine, having thus arranged her plans, summoned the Prince of Condé to refund to the treasury the monies advanced by the king to the German auxiliaries. She was well aware of the injustice of the demand, Charles IX. himself having personally guaranteed the payment, as one of the conditions of peace; but she knew that the exaction would be popular among the Catholics, who insisted on not being taxed for the calamities brought on the country by the heretics. The queen-mother also foresaw that the prince would disobey the summons; but she intended, in default of his appearance, to arrest his person on the plea of contumacy. Condé was then residing at his castle of Noyers, in Burgundy, whither the admiral had repaired, as soon as he had received intelligence of the demands of the government. While they were consulting as to the policy they ought to pursue, the province was gradually filling with troops, divisions of which guarded the roads, bridges, and fords over the rivers. Marshal Tavannes, who commanded in Burgundy, had been strictly ordered to seize the prince; but though that officer was a furious bigot, he had a keen sense

of military honour, and the odious commission forced upon him shocked all his manlier feelings. He was too wary a politician, however, openly to refuse obedience to the royal mandate, and dexterously contrived to save the prince, while he retained his own government. He approached Noyers, whence he wrote to the queen-mother, "The stag is at bay; the chace is prepared." After dispatching this laconic epistle, he sent forward some soldiers to sound the depth of water in the ditches which surrounded the castle: they were seized, as Tavannes intended they should be, and, on being interrogated, their answers fully apprized Condé and the admiral of their danger.

Escape, however, would still have been impossible had Tavannes chosen to have done his duty. Marshal Viellevielle, who commanded in Poitou, was equally remiss or indulgent, and the Calvinist leaders, with their families, having quitted Noyers in August, reached Rochelle in safety on the 10th of September, 1568. They arrived in that friendly town after having endured the most severe hardships, traversing mountain-paths hitherto untrodden, and crossing the Loire, at a ford which had never before been passed.

Nor were these the only victims of intended perfidy who baffled the subtle arts of Catharine. Odet, Cardinal of Châtillon, in the disguise of a common sailor, reached England from one of the ports of Normandy, and his negociations with Queen Elizabeth subsequently proved of eminent service to his party. The Queen of Navarre, whose arrest was entrusted to Montluc, retired from Bearn, and

sought safety at Rochelle, accompanied by her son and daughter. She brought troops and money to aid the Calvinist cause.

The third war now commenced. The edict of January, 1562, confirmed by the last peace, was repealed, and the exercise of any form of worship, excepting the Roman Catholic, was prohibited under the penalty of death. Such extreme measures rallied all the Huguenots to fight for their common safety; nor did they, on this occasion, require any stimulus from the exhortations of the preachers. Soubise, Montmorenci, the Vidame of Chartres, D'Andelot, La Noue, Genlis, Mouy, D'Acier, Morvilliers, and other chiefs of the Calvinists, levied troops in the various provinces in which they had personal interest. So great was the influence of these leaders, that James Crussol, Lord of Acier, alone raised twenty-five thousand men in Languedoc and Dauphiny;—a proof of the comparative weakness of the royal prerogative, and of the vast power retained by the descendants of the ancient baronial aristocracy. D'Acier was one of the most determined and intrepid of the Huguënot party. His banner was a broad pendant of green taffeta, on which was painted a hydra, whose heads represented cardinals, bishops, and priests; while D'Acier himself, in the character of Hercules, and brandishing the club of that heathen demigod, was exhibited in the act of exterminating his enemies.

At the close of 1569, Condé sallied forth from the marches of Lower Poitou, and advanced to Loudun, where the royal army, under the command of the

Duke of Anjou, presented itself to arrest his progress. The severity of the weather prevented any encounter; the royalists retreated, and the prince retired into winter-quarters, retaining his advantages in Poitou, Saintonge, and Angoumois. The Italian princes had sent auxiliaries to the king, who also received aid from some of the German Catholics, under the command of the Marquis of Baden. England sent money and cannon to the Calvinists, and the Duke of Deux-Ponts, a Bavarian prince, marched to the assistance of Condé.

Though the Duke of Anjou had the nominal command of the royal forces, all the military operations in the field were entrusted to Marshal Tavannes; and though that general had allowed Condé and Coligny to escape from the castle of Noyers, disdaining, as he said privately to his friends, to act the part of a sheriff's officer, he was not disposed to allow them to achieve a victory, when ranged in battle array. The object of the Calvinists was to avoid a decisive battle before they were joined by the Duke of Deux-Ponts, while that of Tavannes was to confine them to the provinces they then occupied, lest they should meet the Germans on their route. All the manœuvres of Condé to effect a junction with his allies were defeated by his active and skilful opponent; and, on the 13th of March, 1569, the two armies came in sight of each other, on the banks of the Charente, near to Jarnac, a small frontier-town which divided Limousin from Angoumois.

The river separated the combatants, and, had the Calvinists done their duty, they might have avoided the calamities which soon befel them; but they neglected

to keep a diligent watch, and during the night Tavannes crossed the Charente. The army of Condé was spread over a large tract of ground, while that of the royalists advanced in a compact phalanx: the prince, taken by surprise, attempted to retreat on his main body; but being hard pressed by the cavalry under the Duke of Anjou, he was compelled to wheel round and charge his assailants. At this critical juncture his leg was broken by a kick from the horse of the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, who was riding by his side. Nothing daunted by this misfortune, he harangued his feeble escort, and gallantly plunged into the thick of the fight; but the contest was unequal. Surrounded on all sides, he was soon dismounted: with one knee on the earth, he shook his sword in fierce defiance at his enemies; the nearest of the royalist officers promised him his life, when Montesquiou, captain of the Duke of Anjou's guards, came behind him and fired a pistol ball through his head.¹

“ Oh ! plaines de Jarnac ! O coup trop inhumain !
 Barbare Montesquiou ! moins guerrier qu' assassin !
 Condé déjà mourant tomba sous ta furie,
 J'ai vu porter le coup, j'ai vu trancher sa vie,
 Hélas ! trop jeune encore, mon bras, mon foible bras,
 Ne peut ni prévenir, ni venger son trépas.”

HENRIADE, Chant. 2.

The defeat of the Calvinists was complete. In

¹ The body of the prince was carried in triumph into Jarnac upon a pack-horse. “ All the army,” says Davila, “ making sport at such a spectacle, though, whilst he lived, they were terrified at the name of so great a person.” The body of Condé was afterwards restored to his nephew, Henry, Prince of Bearn, by whom it was buried at Vendome, in a tomb belonging to his ancestors.—*Davila*, p. 141.

the battle of Jarnac perished Robert Stuart, who slew the constable Montmorenci at Saint Denis: he was wounded and taken prisoner; he was then tortured to death, by repeated stabs from sharply pointed daggers. Many suffered as he did. The cruel and remorseless Duke of Montpensier even pronounced summary sentence on the brave and talented La Noue. "My friend," said he, sneeringly, "your trial is finished, and that of all your comrades: look to your conscience." Martigues, a captain in the royal army, and who had been an old brother in arms of La Noue, obtained his pardon, and he was exchanged.

The routed army of the Calvinists rapidly retreated to Cognac, a town in Angoumois, where the admiral, D'Andelot, and other leaders collected the remnant of their dispersed forces, Jane D'Albret, Queen of Navarre, having heard of their defeat, quitted Rochelle, and hastened to join them, accompanied by her son Henry, Prince of Bearn, and the eldest son of the Prince of Condé, who was a few years younger than his cousin. The heroic firmness of this high-minded woman rallied the desponding spirits of the Huguenots, and animated them to fresh exertions. Holding the two young men by either hand, she presented herself before the troops, and thus addressed them: "My friends, we mourn the loss of a prince who, to his dying hour, sustained with equal fidelity and courage the party which he had undertaken to defend; but our tears would be unworthy of him, unless, imitating his bright example, we firmly resolved to sacrifice our own lives rather than abandon our faith. The good cause has

not perished with Condé; and his unhappy fate ought not to fill with despair men who are devotedly attached to their religion. God watches over his own. He gave that prince companions well fitted to serve him while he lived, and he leaves among us brave and experienced captains, able to repair the loss we have sustained by his death. I offer you my son, the young Prince of Bearn; I also confide to you Henry of Condé, son of the chief whom we bewail. May it please Heaven that they both show themselves worthy heirs of the valour of their ancestors, and may these tender pledges, committed to your guardianship, be the bond of your union, and the earnest of your future triumph.”¹

Shouts of acclamation followed this address: the most timid were reassured, and the boldest panted for revenge. The general enthusiasm was kindled to a still higher pitch, when the Prince of Bearn, with warlike vehemence of gesticulation, swore to defend the reformed religion, and persevere in the common cause, till death or victory restored the freedom for which they had fought and bled. The young Condé expressed the same resolution, and immediately the Prince of Bearn was declared generalissimo of the Calvinists.

The immediate political results of this election were highly advantageous. There were many nobles in the army equal to Coligny in wealth and birth; but though they acknowledged the superiority of his military genius, they considered themselves de-

¹ In commemoration of this event, the Queen of Navarre caused gold medals to be struck, with the following inscription: “Pax certa; Victoria integra; Mors honesta.”

graded in accepting him as their chief. By placing the command in the hands of the Prince of Bearn, the scrupulous point of honour was satisfied, and the admiral became in fact, what the prince only was in name. Coligny acted with great prudence in this critical emergency. He fortified Cognac, placed in it a strong garrison, and retired with the main body of his forces to Saintes and Saint Jean D'Angely, from which positions he could advance to Cognac if besieged, while he was also enabled to open a road for the Duke of Deux-Ponts, who was advancing with the German auxiliaries.¹

In this state of affairs the conduct of the royalists was feeble, vacillating, and impolitic. The Dukes of Aumale and Nemours, relatives of the Cardinal of Lorraine, commanded an army fully equal in numbers to that of the Duke of Deux-Ponts; still the Bavarian general marched steadily, though slowly, through the heart of France. The Duke of Anjou did not push on to Cognac, till the town had been strongly fortified; and no sooner did he reach it, than he quickly retreated from the walls. The solution of these mysterious tactics is to be found in the Memoirs of Tavannes, who attributed the whole of these faulty operations to the jealousies and intrigues of the court.

Catharine and the Cardinal of Lorraine had again become mutually distrustful of each other. During

¹ The army of the Duke of Deux-Ponts, who was called Wolfgangus of Bavaria, consisted of fourteen thousand men, and among his officers were William of Nassau, Prince of Orange, and his two brothers, Louis and Henry, who had quitted the Low Countries, to avoid the merciless persecutions of the Duke of Alva.—*Davila*.

the war the queen-mother ruled imperiously, as she, in fact, commanded the army through the Duke of Anjou : it was for this reason that she had appointed the young prince lieutenant-general of the kingdom on the death of the constable Montmorenci. Through her secret agency the Dukes of Aumale and Nemours were prevented from attacking the Duke of Deux-Ponts on his march, for she feared that any victory gained by them would exalt the influence of the house of Lorraine, and to the same extent diminish her own credit. The subtle cardinal soon penetrated this policy, and determined to retaliate with similar insidiousness. He poisoned the mind of the young king against his brother ; he impressed on him that every battle won by the Duke of Anjou conferred personal glory on that prince ; that on account of his being removed from the camp, he would sink in the esteem of his subjects, who were enamoured of military prowess ; that it was his interest to remove his brother from the command, and transfer it to some of the French nobles, or even to a foreigner, recommending the Duke of Alva. This discourse told with full effect ; rivalry and hatred took full possession of the king's heart ; yet Charles stood in such awe of his mother that he dared not proceed to the extremity of superseding the Duke of Anjou. He took a middle course, by sending such orders to the governors of provinces, under his sign-manual, but with strict injunctions to secrecy, as neutralized all the operations of his brother. Such is a specimen of the mode in which nations are sacrificed by the vile intrigues of unprincipled courtiers.

In the mean time the Duke of Deux-Ponts kept advancing, and after a few slight skirmishes, which were ended almost as soon as begun, he encamped on the banks of the Loire. At the moment he expected to be detained by the siege of La Charité the governor marched out with his garrison, and the town opened its gates. The duke crossed the river, and proceeded leisurely to the banks of the Vienne, where his junction with Coligny was to be effected. When about three leagues from Limoges, he fell a victim to an obstinate fever, which had long menaced his existence.

The loss of the Bavarian general was immediately followed by another of more importance to the Calvinist cause. It was the death of D'Andelot, the first patrician apostle of religious liberty in France, a man of spotless integrity and singular hardihood of character: frank, open, and generous, he won friendship by the affability of his demeanour with as much success as the severe principles and reserved manners of his brother conciliated esteem. Coligny deeply felt this bereavement, but sacrificing for the moment all private sorrow to a stern sense of public duty, he marched from his quarters to join the Germans.

When the Duke of Deux-Ponts was dying, he recommended his soldiers to receive his lieutenant, Mansfeldt, as their general. He was obeyed: the army swore allegiance to their new chief, and it was under his auspices, on the 15th of June, 1569, four days after the death of the duke, that he effected his junction with the admiral in the middle

of Guienne, after having started from the banks of the Rhine. The confederated forces amounted to twenty-five thousand men, but the Catholic army still exceeded them in number. They encountered each other at La Roche l'Abeille, not in a pitched battle, but in a very severe skirmish, and the Calvinists had all the advantage of the day. They gave no quarter.

The admiral advanced to Poitiers, to which he laid siege. The young Duke of Guise and his brother, the Duke of Mayenne, had thrown themselves into the town, with several of the nobility; the garrison was numerous and well supplied with provisions. It was attacked and defended with equal vigour; but disease broke out among the Germans, who ate immoderately of the fruits which autumn abundantly supplied: the epidemic spread to the French; whole regiments were rendered unfit for service, and Châtellerault became the hospital of the army. Coligny himself was seized with dysentery, but he never abandoned his post. The Duke of Anjou, who had marched to the relief of Poitiers, suddenly retreated, which afforded the admiral a pretext to retire without compromising his honour.

If Coligny was adored by his own party, he was admired and esteemed by all the high-minded and gallant men among his opponents. None questioned the sincerity of his faith; all praised his invincible fortitude. Some officers in the royalist camp sent him word of their vast numerical superiority, urged him to avoid a battle, and entreated him to listen to terms of accommodation. To these admonitions the

admiral lent a willing ear; but when it was whispered that negotiations were about to be entered upon, the Germans broke out into open mutiny, for their pay was in arrear, and they saw no prospect of indemnification, except by pillage. The royal army approached, and on the 3rd of October, 1569, the battle of Moncontour was fought. Half-an-hour decided the fate of the Calvinists: they feebly resisted the first charge; the second broke their ranks. A pistol-ball shattered the lower jaw of Coligny, but he continued to display the courage of a soldier and the talent of a general: at length he was compelled to yield to numbers. The field of battle, cannon, banners, baggage, all fell into the hands of the Catholics; and out of an army of twenty-five thousand men, only six thousand reached Saint Jean d'Angely in safety.

The great victory of Moncontour obtained for the Duke of Anjou the loudest praises of the Catholics, but the glory he had acquired rankled in the heart of Charles IX. His jealousy was again roused by the Cardinal of Lorraine, and he departed for the army, hoping that his presence, even after the battle, would transfer to his own brow some of the laurels which his brother had culled in the hour of danger. Nor was the king the only person dissatisfied. The old generals were piqued at seeing the chief command confided to a youth, and Damville, son of the old constable, and now governor of Upper Languedoc, purposely allowed the Calvinists to escape, that he might show the court that they could not do without him, and at the same time avenge himself for the slight put on his family.

This disunion again enabled the indefatigable Coligny to recruit his forces, and try the success of another campaign. Early in the spring of 1570, he descended from the mountains of Upper Languedoc, and marshalled his troops in the plain of Toulouse. Hence he advanced to the Loire, pillaging and massacring on the route. Arrived in Burgundy, he was opposed by Marshal Cossé Gonnor, at the head of thirteen thousand men. The strength of the Calvinists did not exceed six thousand, but they rushed boldly on the enemy, on the 25th of June, at Arnay-le-Duc, and gained a complete victory.

This defeat alarmed the court, and the jealousies by which it was divided rendered the impending danger more imminent. They felt that they could strike no blow in concert. Tavannes, under whose skilful guidance the Duke of Anjou had achieved his victories, had quarrelled with the Cardinal of Lorraine, who had contradicted an opinion given by the marshal on military tactics. "Each to his trade, Sir Cardinal," retorted Tavannes; "no man can be a good priest and a good soldier." He then tendered his dismissal, which was accepted; but the difficulty was how to replace him. The Guises and Montmorencies had equal pretensions: the queen objected to the former as relatives of the cardinal, and the cardinal persuaded the king to distrust the latter, as relatives of the admiral and the young Prince of Condé. All the vigour of the government was thus paralyzed by the bickerings of rival parties, while the indomitable perseverance of the Calvinists clearly showed that their restless opposition would never cease until they were all exterminated by the sword, or conciliated

by justice. It was resolved to try the latter experiment.

On the second of August, 1570, peace was concluded at St. Germain-en-Laye, where the king was residing. The preceding edicts were ratified; a general amnesty was granted; free exercise of the reformed religion, excepting at court, conceded; confiscated property was restored, and the Calvinists were declared eligible to all the offices of state. They also obtained two other important privileges; first, they were allowed to challenge six judges on all trials, whether presidents or counsellors of the parliaments; secondly, they were granted four towns of security, in which they had the privilege of placing governors of their own nomination. They selected Rochelle, Montauban, Cognac, and La Charité; but the princes of Bearn and Condé, and twenty of the principal leaders of their party, were required to take an oath that they would surrender them to the king in the space of two years.

In these disastrous wars the chiefs of both parties met a violent end. The Duke of Guise, Montmorenci, and Condé were murdered, while Marshal Saint André and the King of Navarre were slain in battle. Thus civil discord and religious bigotry deprived France of some of its ablest citizens, and the nation at large was plunged into poverty and desolated by pillage, foreign enemies alone profiting by her misfortunes.

During these devastating hostilities, Philip II. had aided Charles IX., while Elizabeth had assisted the Huguenots. The King of Spain regarded the troubles of France as his own special and peculiar affair; but

both his military assistance and advice were injurious to his allies, though he derived no personal advantage, as he had expected, from his tortuous policy. Always disapproving any peace, and constantly recommending the most extreme rigour, he never afforded any sufficient aid to crush the Huguenots, but merely such scanty supplies in men and money, as encouraged the court to place faith in his sincerity. He had no wish to see either party triumph, but hoped to strengthen himself as they weakened each other.

The plans of Elizabeth were executed with greater tact. As it was one of her main objects to keep her Roman Catholic subjects in complete obedience, and deprive them of all chance of successful conspiracy against her throne, it became her policy to concert such measures as would prevent their receiving any assistance either from Philip or Charles. Accordingly she encouraged the troubles in the Low Countries and France, and thus fulfilled her object, so far as her personal interests were concerned, by protecting the Protestants of those two nations from being overwhelmed. By this conduct England was largely benefited; it secured peace at home, and, by offering an asylum to the Flemings, it drew thither their manufactures, commerce, and industry. Philip, on the contrary, gained nothing by fomenting civil war in France, and his whole expenditure for that purpose was pure loss.

REIGN OF CHARLES IX.

FROM THE PEACE OF SAINT GERMAIN-EN-LAYE
TO HIS DEATH.

CHAPTER II. SECTION II.

THE last pacification spread joy throughout France, and excepting those who were parties to the horrible conspiracy that was hatching, all fondly believed that the present tranquillity would be permanent. On the 23rd of October, 1570, Charles IX. married Elizabeth of Austria, second daughter of the Emperor, a discreet princess, of sweet temper, but reserved character. She possessed the esteem and confidence of her husband, but never exercised her influence over him, for her mild and gentle temper quailed under the bold assumption of the imperious Catharine. To commemorate this event splendid festivals were given, to which the nobility of all parties were invited, and a superficial observer would have imagined that the words "Huguenot" and "Catholic" had been swept from the language, and merged in that of Frenchmen.

With the ostensible view of conciliating all conflicting interests, but with the real intention of masking his perfidious and sanguinary designs, Charles

endeavoured to promote various alliances among the leading families of the kingdom, and proposed his youngest sister, Margaret of Valois, as the consort of the Prince of Bearn. As this prince in after years achieved an immortal reputation, as Henry IV., a brief narrative of his early life will not be misplaced in this history.

The family of Bourbon traces its origin to the most illustrious of the kings of France, for Antony, father of Henry, was descended from Robert, Count of Clermont, who was fifth son of Saint Louis. Antony married Jane D'Albret, daughter and heiress of Henry D'Albret, King of Navarre, and of Margaret of Valois, sister of Francis I. This Henry D'Albret was son of John, from whom Ferdinand the Catholic had conquered Upper Navarre, and he only was able to preserve that portion of his patrimonial territories which are on this side of the Pyrenees, a small province, and one of little fertility ; but he also enjoyed Bearn, D'Albret, Foix, Armagnac, and some other lands bordering on these.

Antony had commanded an army in Picardy against Charles V., and it was in his camp that Jane felt the first sensations which announced that she was about to become a mother. In the ninth month of her pregnancy she repaired to Pau, where her father, Henry D'Albret, was residing, and on the 13th of December, 1553, she was delivered of a son, who proved himself worthy of the crown of France. The child could not have fallen into better hands than those of his grandfather. Henry D'Albret had made a will which he always carried in a gold box, suspended from his neck with a chain. This object

had long excited the curiosity of his daughter. During the period of gestation she constantly and earnestly entreated her father to give her the box and the will. "It shall be yours one day," said the old king, "when you have shown me what you bear, provided you have neither a puny nor an ugly child, and provided also that during the act of delivery you sing a song in the dialect of Bearn." Jane submitted to these conditions: with the first pang she commenced her song. The old man, being summoned to her chamber, quickly made his appearance, put the gold box and chain round his daughter's neck, placed the naked infant in one of the folds of his robe, and walked away, saying, "This is for you, my daughter, but this belongs to me." The first nourishment the child took was from the hand of his grandfather, who gave him a clove of garlick, with which he rubbed his lips, and seeing that the babe sucked it, he gave him some wine.

The young Henry was brought up in the castle of Courasse, in the mountains of Bearn. He lived on the coarsest diet, his ordinary food being brown bread, beef, cheese, and garlic: he used to play with the children of the peasants, bareheaded and barefooted. While in his cradle he was called Prince de Viane. Shortly afterwards he had the title of Duke of Beaumont, and, subsequently, that of Prince of Bearn. While a child, he was presented to Henry II., who asked him if he would be his son. "He is my father," said the little prince, in Bearnais, pointing to the King of Navarre. "Well," replied Henry, "will you be my son-in-law?" "Oh, with all my heart," was the reply. From that early date his

marriage with the Princess Margaret was resolved upon. At Bayonne, the Duke of Medina, looking at him earnestly, said, "This prince either will or ought to be an emperor."¹

In the *Memoirs of Nevers* we meet with some letters, written in 1567, by the principal magistrates of Bordeaux, which contain several interesting particulars concerning the person and manners of young Henry. "We have here," says one of them, "the Prince of Bearn: it must be confessed that he is a charming youth. At thirteen years of age he has all the riper qualities of eighteen or nineteen: he is agreeable, polite, obliging, and behaves to every one with an air so easy and engaging, that wherever he is there is always a crowd. He mixes in conversation like a wise and prudent man, speaks always to the purpose; and when it happens that the court is the subject of discourse, it is easy to see that he is perfectly well acquainted with it, and never says more or less than he ought, in whatever place he is. I shall all my life hate the new religion for having robbed us of so worthy a subject." Another expresses himself in the following terms: "His hair is slightly red, yet the ladies think him not less agreeable on that account; his face is finely shaped, his nose neither too long nor too small, his eyes full of sweetness, his skin brown but clear, and his whole countenance animated by an uncommon vivacity: with all these graces if he is not well with the ladies he must be extremely unfortunate." Again: "He loves diversions and the pleasures of the table. When he wants money, he obtains it in a manner quite novel,

¹ These anecdotes are recorded by Cayet, tom. i. p. 240.

and very agreeable to others as well as to himself. This is his plan: to those, whether men or women, whom he thinks his friends, he sends a promissory note, written and signed by himself, and entreats them to send back the note, or the sum mentioned in it. Judge if there is any family that can refuse him: every one looks upon it as an honour to have a note from this prince.”¹

The education of Henry had been carefully attended to. His first preceptor, La Gaucherie, cultivated his mind chiefly by conversational instruction. He had the wisdom to abandon that trifling course of studies which had been invented in an age comparatively barbarous, and which was rather calculated to disgust than enlighten. La Gaucherie, moreover, had the high merit of instilling into his pupils the purest principles of virtue and the noblest sentiments of honour, which ever afterwards, if we except the errors of gallantry, and these the moralist must condemn, formed the undeviating rule of his conduct. At the death of La Gaucherie, Henry was confided to the tuition of Florent Chrétien, a man of great merit; and as he was a confirmed Huguenot, he readily entered into the views of the Queen of Navarre, who having embraced Calvinism, wished that her son should be trained in the new religion.

Henry was only fifteen years of age when his mother conducted him to Rochelle, as has been narrated. At that early age he remarked the military faults of Condé and Coligny, though they were two of the greatest captains of the age. At Jarnac, he

¹ *Memoires de Nevers*, tom. ii. p. 586, et seq.

saw the imprudence of giving battle, though it was indeed inevitable after the successful manœuvre of Tavannes; but he had advised an attack on the Duke of Anjou, several days before, at a moment which in all probability would have proved favourable. During the battle of Montcontour, the admiral not wishing to expose the person of this young prince, whose ardour and impetuosity of character were well known, to danger, placed him aside, on a hill, with a guard of four thousand horse. The advanced column of the Duke of Anjou was broken, and if the reserve, with which the prince was, had then charged, the Calvinists would have gained the victory. Henry desired them to advance, but they refused to move, unless ordered by the admiral, on which the young hero exclaimed, "We lose the battle," a prediction which was fearfully accomplished.

Such were the promises of future excellence displayed by the Prince of Bearn in his youth, all of which he realized, or rather exceeded in manhood. He was now invited to marry Margaret of Valois, a union which, it was hoped, would form a bond of concord between the Catholics and Calvinists. His mother, however, without putting a decided negative on the arrangement, refused to give it her positive sanction, for she had dark forebodings of sinister designs. This tacit opposition disconcerted the court, who now feared the slightest breath of suspicion, lest their exterminating conspiracy should be detected, ere it was ripe for execution. They therefore adopted every device to lull the Huguenots into a false security. Marshal

Montmorenci was sent to Rouen, with the president De Marsan, to punish the outrages that had been committed against the Huguenots in that city; any infringement of the last treaty of peace was severely punished, and King Charles used to call it emphatically *his* treaty and *his* peace.¹ When the Guises appeared at court, they were received with great coldness, on which they retired to their estates, bitterly and loudly complaining that the past services of their family were forgotten; and so well feigned was their assumed indignation that all, except those who were initiated in the secret, believed they were sincere. The king next expressed a wish that the Prince of Condé should marry Mary of Cleves, Marchioness De l'Isle, who had been brought up in the court of the Queen of Navarre, and was a highly advantageous match; and, finally, he brought about a marriage between Coligny and Jacqueline of Savoy, Countess d'Entremont, giving a nuptial present of one hundred thousand crowns, together with all the benefices which had been enjoyed by Odet de Chatillon, the admiral's brother.²

These several acts produced, to a great extent, all the effect that was desired; but distrust was not yet totally removed. The king felt it, and in the summer of 1571, he took a journey into Touraine, hoping that the Queen of Navarre would visit him on his route; nor was he disappointed: she came to his

¹ Memoires de Sully, tom. i. p. 18.

² Odet de Chatillon died at Southampton in 1571. De Thou declares that his *valet de chambre* poisoned him with an apple, as he was preparing to return to France, when recalled by his brother.

court from Rochelle, with the Princes of Bearn, Condé, and the admiral. When Coligny stood in the presence of his majesty, out of respect, the old soldier was about to fall on one knee. Charles saw his intention, seized him by the arm, and prevented the intended obeisance, saying, "I hold you now, admiral, nor shall you for the future quit me when you please: I cannot spare so valuable a friend." Then, with great emphasis and apparent genuineness of feeling, he exclaimed, "This is indeed the happiest day of my life." The queen-mother, the Duke of Anjou, and all the attendant nobles loaded Coligny with compliments and caresses, and especially the Duke of Alençon, the youngest brother of the king, who, giving full play to the vivacity and frankness of youth, expressed his esteem for the admiral in terms the most extravagant. But he alone was sincere; he was not yet old enough to be steeped in the sin of dissimulation.

Another bait was held out to Coligny—it was a war against Spain, in the Low Countries. The king put forward two reasons for these hostilities: first, he observed that Elizabeth of England had offered the Flemings her protection, and should she succeed in expelling Philip, she would reap all the advantages of the conquest, to the detriment of France; whence he argued that sound policy demanded that France should ally herself with the Prince of Orange, and thus defeat the schemes of the English. Secondly, the king expressed his conviction that his sister Elizabeth, of France, wife of Philip II., and who had died in 1568, had been

poisoned by her husband, and this murder he was determined to avenge.¹ He added, that he would carry the war into Artois and Flanders, the restitution of which he would demand from the King of Spain, as ancient fiefs of his crown, and also Upper Navarre, for the Prince of Bearn. These declarations completely won the confidence of Coligny, who was not a little flattered, perhaps, at having the command of the army, especially in a cause that was nearest to his heart.

The political atmosphere was now serene and cloudless, and little did the Calvinists suspect that it was the harbinger of a fearful storm. Their leaders came fearlessly to Paris, sharing the pleasures of the capital, partaking of the hospitalities of the court, and visiting all places of public entertainment with unbounded confidence. In the middle of May, 1572, the Queen of Navarre arrived at the Louvre, and on the 9th of June she was a corpse. Suspicions of poison arose, but the most rigid scrutiny afforded no proof to justify the rumour; still it was generally entertained, for the practice had become so frequent, that every presumption was in favour of the crime.² Lignerolles, favourite of the Duke of

¹ The Spaniards attributed her death to bleeding and improper medicines which the physicians, not knowing that she was pregnant, administered. She died shortly after Don Carlos, son of Philip, to whom she had originally been betrothed; and Don Carlos was certainly put to death by order of his father. All the French historians affirm, that the Princess Elizabeth was poisoned.

² The Queen of Navarre was forty-two years of age when she died. Many different opinions prevailed, as to the manner of her death. The memoirs of L'Etoile, D'Aubigné, and all the

Anjou, suspected of having revealed some secrets of the court, was slain before the eyes of that prince ; Odet of Châtillon had been poisoned by his servant ; and the Seigneur De Moui fell at Niort, under the dagger of Maurevel,¹ who was publicly called “ The king’s executioner.” Many others of less note had suffered the same tragical fate, and these examples

Calvinists, attributed it to poison, which they say was given to her in a pair of gloves, by a Florentine, named René, perfumer to the queen-mother. Davila expresses himself in the same terms. De Serres affirms that the physicians appointed to make a *post-mortem* examination, were strictly enjoined not to touch the brain. Le Grain declares that she died of pleurisy. La Popeliniere, Péréfixe, and De Thou deny that she was poisoned ; and the last-named writer says that the true cause of her death was an abscess in her breast : this opinion is supported by Mathieu, the historian. In the notes to the *Henriade* it is stated that Caillaud, physician to the Queen of Navarre, and Desnœuds, her surgeon, dissected her brain, which they found sound ; all they detected of irregularity were some globules of water, lodged between the cranium and the epicranium which covers the skull, which they considered to be the cause of the frequent head-aches, from which the queen had habitually suffered ; moreover, they formally attested that she died of abscess in the breast. It should be observed, that those who opened the body were Huguenots, and had there been any ground of suspicion, their prejudices would have inclined them to attribute her death to poison. It may be said that their secrecy was purchased by the court ; but this would be a most unjust and unfounded suspicion. Desnœuds was a most zealous Protestant, and constantly wrote satires against the court after her death, which he would not have dared to have done, had he been bribed ; nor does he in any one of his libels insinuate that Jane D’Albret was poisoned. Moreover, it is not at all credible that so wary a woman as Catharine would have made a confidant of her perfumer, in a matter of such fearful import.

¹ He was called Nicolas de Louviers, Lord of Maurevel in Brie.

made the suspicion of murder almost universally credited.

The death of the Queen of Navarre retarded the marriage of her son, who now assumed the title of King of Navarre. During this interval, the admiral had retired to his castle at Châtillon-sur-Loing, where he received numerous letters from his friends, strongly urging him not to return to Paris. They did not rest their warning on any specific fact, but their admonitions were rather the result of general inferences from current reports and peculiarities of conduct which they had observed. To this advice Coligny turned a deaf ear; his habitual caution forsook him when it was most needed. His confidence in the king was unshaken; he talked of nothing but a treaty, offensive and defensive, between France, England, and the Protestant princes of Germany; and he already fancied himself at the head of the army of Flanders, conquering from Spain the civil and religious liberties of the Low Countries. Thus buoyed up with hope, he came to Paris, and unfortunately communicated his enthusiasm to many of his friends. He met, however, an objector in Langoiran, one of the gentlemen attached to his party, who requested leave of absence. "On what account?" asked Coligny, utterly astonished. "Because they caress you too much," said Langoiran, "and I would rather escape with the fools, than perish with the wise."¹

The Prince of Condé and Mary of Cleves had already been married. The nuptials of the King

¹ Davila, p. 179.

of Navarre and Margaret of Valois soon followed, and they were celebrated with royal magnificence. Charles was resolved that the ceremonial of the marriage should not be wholly conformable to either religion ; not to the Calvinist, because the vows were to be received by a priest, who was the Cardinal of Bourbon ; not to the Romish, because those vows were to be received without the sacramental ceremonies of the church. A great scaffold was erected in the court before the principal gate and entry of Notre-Dame, on Monday, August 18th, 1572, upon which the parties were betrothed and married on the same day, and by one single act. This done, the bridegroom retired to a Calvinist chapel to hear a sermon, and the bride went into the cathedral to hear mass, according to the articles of the treaty of marriage ; after which they both attended the entertainment prepared for them in the great hall of the palace.¹ On this occasion Charles gave his sister three hundred thousand crowns.

Four days after the celebration of these inauspicious nuptials, an attempt was made to assassinate the admiral, as he was returning from the Louvre. He was fired at from a window screened by a curtain; his left arm was broken, and the index finger of his right hand shot off. Quite unmoved, Coligny coolly pointed out the house from which the musket was discharged : his attendants broke open the gate, but the perpetrators of the crime had escaped. The old man was carried home by his servants, weltering in his blood.

² Le Grain. Decade de Henri Quatre, tom. ii.

The assassin was the infamous Maurevel, the same who had murdered the Seigneur de Moui. The house in which he was secreted belonged to Villemur, who had been preceptor to the Guises, and he was met in his flight upon a horse belonging to the king's stables.¹ There is no doubt that Catharine alone plotted this villany, of which Charles, with all his vices, was innocent. When the news reached the king he was playing at tennis; he threw the racket from him in the most violent rage, exclaiming, "Must I be perpetually troubled with new broils? Shall I never have any quiet?"²

This horrible outrage kindled the fury of the Calvinists, who with one voice demanded justice. The King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé presented a petition to Charles, who pledged his royal word that he would take a signal vengeance on the assassin. The gates of Paris were closed, the police were ordered to make domiciliary visits, and arrest all persons to whom the slightest suspicion could attach. His majesty openly notified his high displeasure to all the foreign ambassadors, and wrote to the same effect to all the governors of provinces. He visited Coligny, accompanied by the queen-mother, the Duke of Anjou, the marshals of France, and many of the chief nobility. Every expression of condolence was uttered, calculated to afford consolation to the admiral, and ample justice was promised. The old man was deeply gratified by this display of af-

¹ Sully, tom. i. p. 33.

² De Serres, tom. ii. p. 470. Davila says that the king was playing with the Duke of Guise, and that he merely *feigned* displeasure.

fection and esteem, and at once turned the conversation to the war in Flanders, with which scheme he was perfectly infatuated. The interview lasted an hour, during the whole of which Catharine stood close at the side of her son, eager to catch every syllable; but her vigilance was disappointed, for Coligny whispered something to the king which made him start suddenly, on which the queen-mother trembled from head to foot. The very attempt at secrecy sealed his doom.

In the first conversation which Catharine had with her son after the admiral had been wounded, she told him that her suspicions rested on the Duke of Guise, who was prompted to revenge the death of his father, assassinated by Poltrot before Orleans, the duke having repeatedly declared himself convinced that Coligny had planned the murder. This statement did not satisfy the king, who insisted that the Duke of Guise should exculpate himself or be punished, and he gave orders for his arrest, which the queen-mother countermanded. But a crisis was now at hand, for the king had very strong passions, and the first bursts of his fury were most terrible. Catharine saw no other mode of averting the storm than by commissioning Marshal De Retz to wait on Charles, and avow that the Duke of Guise was not the only person guilty, but that the queen-mother and the Duke of Anjou were his accomplices, and that they were forced to assail the life of Coligny, as he was secretly plotting to overthrow the government. This message De Retz delivered; and, as it had been agreed upon, Catharine, the Duke of Anjou, the Count of Nevers, Birage, keeper of the seals, and

Marshal Tavannes broke in upon the interview, and confirmed all that De Retz had stated. Catharine then justified herself, by saying that the admiral had privately levied twenty thousand men in Switzerland and Germany; that he intended to unite them to the discontented French, and destroy the throne and the established religion: she, moreover, observed that these designs were known to many of the Catholics, who, alarmed at the recent partiality shown by the king towards the Huguenots, had determined to elect a captain-general, and declare war against the heretics. She then pointed out to him that he would be reduced to nothingness between the two parties, and lose all power and authority in the kingdom.

These considerations, says the Duke of Anjou, (as his words are reported by his favourite physician, Miron,) produced a marvellous and strange metamorphosis in the king; for if he had before been difficult to persuade, he was now still more difficult to be restrained. Rising with fury, and swearing by his habitual oath, the death of the Saviour, he exclaimed, "Since you deem it right to slay the admiral, I consent; but let the slaughter extend to all the Huguenots in France without exception, for I wish that not one may live to reproach me with this decision."

The massacre of Saint Bartholomew was now resolved upon, and the nights of the 23rd and 24th of August, 1572, were fixed for its execution. A pistol was fired as the signal for the commencement of the butchery. The revengeful Guise hurried to the residence of the admiral: he was accompanied by two of his creatures, Petrucci, a Siennese, and Bême, a

German, escorted by a party of soldiers. The ruffians burst open the doors, and entered the chamber of Coligny; "*To death!*" they fiercely shouted. The old man, hearing the noise, had risen from his bed, and was leaning against the wall: he was in the act of saying his prayers. Bême was the first who saw him. "Are you Coligny?" said the German. "I am," replied the admiral: "young man, respect my grey hairs." Bême at once passed his sword through the body of his victim, and, drawing it reeking from the wound, smote him on the face: numerous blows followed, and the champion of Calvinism fell on the floor, weltering in his blood. "It is all over!" shouted Bême from the window. "Monseigneur D'Angoulême does not believe it," answered the ruthless Guise, "nor will he believe it till he sees the old heretic at his feet." The corpse was instantly thrown into the court-yard: the Duke of Angoulême wiped away the blood from the face that he might identify the features, and it is said that he so far forgot himself as to trample it under his feet.¹

The head of the admiral was carried to Catharine, and the Protestant writers affirm that she sent it to Rome. The body was dragged through the streets by the populace, and hung by the heels on a gibbet at Montfaucon, where it was customary to slaughter cattle for the Paris market. The king had the indecency to visit this dishonouring spectacle: it was remarked to him that the corpse had a bad smell; he answered in the language of Vitellius, "The carcase of an enemy always emits a pleasant odour." The parliament branded the memory of the hero of Cal-

¹ *Esprit de la Ligue*, tom. i. p. 295.

vinism; his children were degraded to the rank of plebeians, and declared incapable of holding any public employment; the castle of Châtillon-sur-Loing was razed to the ground, and all the trees on the estate cut down to within four feet of the ground. Notwithstanding these malevolent and bigoted decrees, the admiral's daughter, widow of Taligni, who was also murdered at Saint Bartholomew, was subsequently married to the Prince of Orange.

The historian Mezeray relates that all the particulars of the death of Coligny were predicted to him by one Michael Crellet, whom the admiral had sentenced to be hanged. He told him that he would be assassinated, thrown out of a window, and hung up by the heels. This anecdote is here recorded merely as a specimen of the credulity of the times.

While the murder of the admiral was perpetrating, the streets of Paris ran red with blood, and this continued during three days. Among those of distinguished families who perished, were Rochefoucauld, Crussol, Pluviaux, Berny, Clermont, Lavardin, Caumont de la Force, Pardillan, Levi, and many thousands more of brave officers. Rohan, Montgommeri, and the Vidame of Chartres made their escape. Grammont, Duras, Gamaches, and Bouchavannes obtained their pardon from the king. "Bleed, bleed!" shouted out the merciless Tavannes: "the physicians say that bleeding is as good in August as in May."¹ The Dukes of Guise and Montpensier

¹ His son, who wrote his Memoirs, says, that when his father was on his death-bed, he made a general confession of his evil deeds: when the confessor remarked to him, with an air of astonishment, "Marshal, you are silent as to what you did on the night of Saint Bartholomew;" "I consider that," interrupted

rode through the streets, exclaiming, "It is the will of the king: slay on to the last, and let not one escape." Fiercely were these sanguinary orders executed. The Count of Coconnas seized thirty prisoners, put them in prison, and offered to spare their lives if they would recant: on their refusal, he put them to death with his own hand, by slow and lingering torments. The butcher, Pezou, who slaughtered men, women, and children as he did cattle, boasted of having in one day killed and drowned one hundred and twenty Huguenots. René, perfumer to the queen-mother, frequented all the gaols in which the Protestants were immured, and amused himself by stabbing them with daggers. He decoyed a rich jeweller into his house, under the pretext of saving him, but when he had seized all his moveables, he cut his throat and threw the body into the sea. Crucé, a gold-wire drawer, used to take off his coat, and exhibit his naked arm, saying, "This arm, on the day of Saint Bartholomew, put to death more than four hundred heretics." These ruffians were armed by the jesuits, who promised them absolution for all other crimes, (for these murders were lauded as acts of devotion,) and happiness in heaven in proportion to the extent of their atrocities.

Nor did fanaticism alone sharpen the sword or direct the dagger. The scene of tumult was taken advantage of to revenge private malice: defendants in actions at law assassinated the plaintiffs, debtors slaughtered their creditors, jealous lovers butchered their rivals. Antony de Clermont, Marquis of Res-the dying man, "as a meritorious action, which will efface all my sins."—*Notes to the Henriade.*

nel, was murdered by his own relation, Louis de Clermont, of Bussy d'Amboise, with whom he was then in litigation for the marquisate of Resnel. Charles de Quellenc, Baron of Pont, in Brittany, fell a victim to jealousy, and his dead body excited the curiosity of the ladies of the court, on account of a process for divorce which was then carrying on by his wife, Catharine de Parthenay, daughter and heiress of John de Soubise. Brantome declares that many gentlemen of his acquaintance realized as much as ten thousand crowns by pillage, and it is certain that the king and queen collected a large stock of jewellery plundered from their subjects.¹

The escape of De Caumont, who became the famous Marshal de la Force, and who lived to the advanced age of eighty-four, possesses an interest so truly romantic, that it merits to be here recorded. The facts about to be narrated were written in his own hand, and the Duke of la Force communicated them to Voltaire, who printed them in his notes to the *Henriade*.

Two days before the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, the king had ordered the parliament to liberate an officer who was prisoner at the "*Conciergerie*," the prison to which parliamentary prisoners were consigned: the parliament having neglected to comply with this order, the king sent some of his guards to break open the gates of the prison, and release the prisoner; on the following day the parliament sent a remonstrance to his majesty, and all the members of the deputation who presented it had their arms in a sling, to denote that the king had wounded and

¹ Brantome, tom. ix. p. 410.

mained justice. These proceedings created a great sensation, and when the massacre commenced the Huguenots were told that the tumult was no more than a seditious rising of the people in favour of the parliament, against the prerogative. A horse-dealer, who had seen the Duke of Guise and his satellites enter the house of Coligny, and who, mixing with the crowd, had been an eye-witness of the murder of the admiral, hurried to Caumont de la Force, to whom he had, eight days before, sold ten horses, and apprized him of his danger.

La Force and his two sons lodged in the faubourg Saint Germain, as did many other Calvinists. No bridge at that time connected the faubourg with the town. All the boats had been seized by orders from the court to convey the assassins into the faubourg. The horse-dealer swam across the river, and thus gave information to La Force. He had already left his house; he had time to save himself; but seeing that his children did not follow him, he turned back to find them. Scarcely had he entered his dwelling when the murderers arrived: one, named Martin, who was their leader, entered his apartment, disarmed him and his sons, and, with accents of fury, told him to prepare for death. La Force offered a ransom of two thousand crowns, which was accepted, and he took his oath to pay it within two days: the assassins, having pillaged the house, desired La Force and his sons to put their handkerchiefs on their hats in the shape of crosses, and tuck up the sleeves of their right arms up to their shoulders; this was the mark by which the assassins distinguished each other. In this state they passed the river, and

were conducted into the town. Marshal de la Force declares that he saw the river covered with dead bodies: his father, his brother, and himself were landed under the walls of the Louvre; there they saw many of their friends butchered, among others the brave De Piles, father of him who slew the son of Malherbe in a duel. Martin led his prisoners to his house, in the street des Petits-Champs, and made La Force swear that neither himself nor his children would quit it till the two thousand crowns were paid: he then left them under the guard of two Swiss soldiers, and departed to seek fresh victims.

One of the two Swiss, touched with compassion, offered to save the prisoners, but La Force refused to accept this generous assistance, saying that he had pledged his word, and that he would rather die than forfeit it. One of his aunts sent him the two thousand crowns, and they were about being paid over to Martin, when the Count of Coconnas, the same who was afterwards decapitated, arrived, and told La Force that the Duke of Anjou wished to speak with him. La Force then saw that his death was certain; he followed Coconnas, beseeching him to spare his two innocent children. The younger, who was thirteen years of age, named James Nompar, and who wrote this statement, reproached the murderers with their crimes, invoking on them the vengeance of Heaven. However, the two boys were dragged along with their father to the end of the street of Petits-Champs: the elder received several blows from a dagger, exclaiming, "O, my father! O, my God! I am dead." At the same moment the father fell a corpse on the

body of his slaughtered child. The younger, covered with their blood, but who miraculously had escaped any wound, had the prudence also to exclaim, "I am dead." He fell down between his father and brother, whose last sighs were breathed into his ear. The assassins thinking they were all dead, went away, saying, "There is an end of the three." Some plunderers came to strip their bodies: the young La Force had on laced stockings; a marker of a tennis-court, named Verdelet, wished to possess himself of these stockings, and as he drew them off, he commiserated the fate of the victim, and said, "Alas! this is a great pity: it is but a child; what could he have done?" This expression of kindness induced the young La Force gently to raise his head and whisper, "I am not yet dead." The man kindly answered, "Stir not, my child; have patience till I come again." He then left him, but returned in the dusk of the evening, and announced his presence by saying, "Raise yourself up; there is no one near but your friend," and then put over his shoulders a tattered mantle. As he was leading him along, he was met by one of the assassins, who called out, "Who is this youth?" "It is my nephew," answered his conductor. "The young dog has got drunk, and I am going to give him a sound horsewhipping." At length the poor tennis-marker got him into his house, and demanded thirty crowns for his trouble. Thence the young La Force, disguised as a beggar, was taken to the arsenal, where his relative, Marshal Biron, grand master of the artillery, resided; he was there concealed in the dress of a girl in the women's apart-

ments ; but it being rumoured that he was alive, and the emissaries of the court searching after him, he was sent into the country, as a page, under the name of Beaupuy.

While these atrocities were being perpetrated in the streets of Paris, the Louvre itself was the scene of sanguinary outrage. All the Calvinist nobles then in the royal residence, and who had come to Paris to celebrate the nuptials of the King of Navarre, were called out one by one, and killed in the court-yard by the soldiers, who stood in two long ranks, with arms ready to execute their sanguinary orders. In this manner two hundred were massacred, and, including others slaughtered in various parts of Paris, five hundred of the Protestant nobility perished.¹

Margaret of Valois had only been married six days. That princess relates all that fell within her own observation in her Memoirs. As she was about to retire for the night, on the eve of Saint Bartholomew, and had saluted her mother, her sister seized her by the arm, and sobbing loudly, whispered to her, "Dear sister, do not go." Catharine overheard this intimation : she was greatly irritated, and reproached her eldest daughter for her indiscretion. Angry words were interchanged, but Margaret was peremptorily ordered to leave the room, when the tears of her sister flowed anew. "As to myself," says Margaret, "I did as my mother commanded, chilled with vague apprehensions, but utterly at a loss to imagine what danger I had to fear."

When she entered her chamber, she saw her hus-

¹ Davila, p. 183.

band, surrounded by thirty or forty Huguenot gentlemen, whose persons she did not know: they remained during the whole night, and talked of nothing but the assassination of the admiral. At the dawn of day, the King of Navarre quitted the apartment with his friends, when the young queen, wearied with watching, locked her door, and fell asleep.

Within an hour afterwards she started from her couch, being roused by a man who struck at her door with his hands and feet, and cried out at the top of his voice, "Navarre! Navarre!" The queen's nurse, thinking it was the king, turned the key, when a man, covered with blood, rushed into the room, pursued by four soldiers, who entered as quickly as himself: the fugitive was wounded in the elbow by a sabre cut, and a pike had been passed through his shoulder. "Eager to save himself," continues Margaret, "he threw himself on my bed, and clasped me round the neck. I slid down on the floor, but his grasp was firm, and he fell alongside of me. I had never seen the man before, and, in my excess of fear, I knew not whether his purpose was to insult me, or whether the soldiers sought him or me as their victim." At length the captain of the guard arrived, who dismissed the men, and spared the life of the fugitive,¹ at the earnest entreaties of the queen. The officer then conducted Margaret to the apartments of her sister, who had given her the friendly warning above described. As

¹ The gentleman who took refuge in the apartment of the Queen of Navarre, was Gaston de Levis, Lord of Leyran.—*Sully*, tom. i. p. 40.

she entered the ante-chamber, a Huguenot gentleman was pierced through the body with a pike at three paces distant; the terrified lady fainted away, and some time elapsed before she regained the use of her faculties.

When her senses returned, all her feelings were again agonized for the sake of her husband, but she was quickly told that he was safe. Charles had already summoned him and the Prince of Condé into his presence. He received them, says Sully, with a fierce countenance, and eyes sparkling with rage, and avowed that the admiral and the other rebels had been massacred by his orders. He then expressed his conviction that they had not implicated themselves in the conspiracy of the Huguenots, though they might have listened to their regicidal counsels; and he then offered to pardon them, if they would abjure their false religion and profess the faith of the church of Rome. Their answer being ambiguous and unsatisfactory, Charles gave them three days to consider the matter and come to a decision.¹

The massacre was not confined to Paris. Orders to exterminate the Huguenots were forwarded to all

¹ As the King of Navarre went to the King, Catharine gave orders that he should be led under the vaults, and made to pass through the guards drawn up in files on either side, and standing in menacing attitudes. At this unexpected sight he trembled and recoiled back several paces, on which Nançai-la-Châtre, captain of the guards, endeavoured to remove his apprehensions, by swearing that the soldiers should do him no harm. Henry, though he gave but little credit to his words, was obliged to walk on amidst the carabines and halberts.—*Pérelève.*

the provincial governors, and the commandants of cities. The slaughter was horrible at Meaux, Angers, Bourges, Orleans, Lyons, Toulouse, and Rouen, and in a very many of the small towns and villages; but humanity had not entirely quitted France. Claude de Savoy, Count of Tende, saved the lives of all the Protestants in Dauphiny. When he received the king's letter, commanding him to destroy them, he said, "That it could not be his majesty's order, and that he would treat it as a forgery." Eleonor de Chabot, Count of Charny, the lieutenant-general commanding in Burgundy, acted in the same spirit; there was only one Protestant murdered at Dijon. Heran de Montmorin, governor of Auvergne, positively refused to obey his instructions, unless the king was personally present. The Viscount of Ortes, governor of Bayonne, wrote in the following terms to Charles: "Sire, I have communicated your majesty's orders to your faithful inhabitants in the city and to the troops in the garrison. I found there good citizens, brave soldiers, but not one executioner. On this point, therefore, you must not expect any obedience from me."¹

Historians have recorded one act of personal generosity, amidst these diabolical crimes, which, however, is of an extraordinary character and marked by the ferocity of the times. Vezins, a gentleman of Querci, had long been on the worst terms with one of his neighbours, named Regnier, a Calvinist,

¹ Sully, tom. i. p. 45. De Thou, lib. 52, and 53. D'Aubigne, tom. ii. lib. 1. The Count de Tende, and the Viscount of Ortes, both of whom died shortly afterwards, were supposed to have been poisoned.

whom he had sworn to put to death. They both were at Paris during the massacre, and Regnier feared that Vezins, availing himself of this opportunity, would put his threat into execution. While in this state of alarm, the door of his apartment was broken open, and Vezins entered, sword in hand, accompanied by two soldiers. "Follow me," said he to Regnier, in a harsh and abrupt tone. Regnier, filled with consternation, walked on between the two soldiers, assured that he was going to instant death. Vezins told him to mount a horse: they rode out of the city. Without stopping, or without a word being exchanged, Vezins escorted his prisoner to his house at Querci. "You are now in safety," said he: "I could have profited of this opportunity to obtain my revenge, but between brave men danger ought to be shared; for that reason I have saved you. When you will, you will find me ready to settle our disputes as it becomes gentlemen." Regnier answered by warm expressions of gratitude, demanding the friendship of his enemy. "I leave you free to love me or hate me," replied the fierce Vezins, "and I have only brought you to your castle, that you may still live to make your election." Without waiting another moment, he put spurs into his horse, and rode back to the capital.

One of the most atrocious circumstances attending this massacre, was the personal conduct of the king, who fired loaded muskets on the people from the windows of the Louvre. Brantome declares that as soon as the light dawned, after the night of the 23rd, the king posted himself at the window of

his bed-room, and seeing some stragglers who were attempting to escape, took up a large fowling-piece, and fired into the midst of them; but the intended victims were out of range of the shot. Many persons heard Marshal de Tessé relate, that in his youth he knew a gentleman upwards of one hundred years old, who, when young, had served in the guards of Charles IX. He inquired of him the particulars of Saint Bartholomew, and specially asked him if it were true that the king had fired upon his subjects. "It was myself, sir," said the old man, "who loaded the muskets.¹"

The notes to the *Henriade* mention two other circumstances connected with the massacre, which savour strongly of the marvellous, but they merit record, as showing in some degree the spirit of the age. Henry IV. declared openly that, after the slaughter, a number of ravens perched on the Louvre, and during seven nights the king and all the court heard their croakings, which were most loud and lugubrious, at the same hour. He mentions another prodigy still more extraordinary. He says that for several days before the murders commenced, while playing at dice with the Dukes of Alençon and Guise, he saw drops of blood on the table; that he twice wiped them off, when they reappeared, on which he quitted the game, seized with terror.

At the expiration of the three days which Charles had granted to the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé, in which interval they were to make up their minds either to recant or die, the king sum-

¹ Notes to the *Henriade*.

moned them into his presence, and, in a tone of thunder, said to them, "Death, the mass, or the bastille; take your choice." The King of Navarre and his sister, Catharine of Bourbon, yielded at once. The Prince of Condé showed some resistance, but at length he submitted to his inexorable tyrant, as well as Mary of Cleves, his wife, and Frances of Orleans, his mother-in-law. All wrote to the pope declaring their conversion, and received absolution from the Cardinal of Bourbon. The King of Navarre did more; he ordered throughout all his dominions the re-establishment of the Romish religion, and prohibited the Calvinistic form of worship.

Every possible publicity was given to these conversions; and though they were manifestly extorted by force, it was industriously circulated that they were the result of pious reflection and heart-felt conviction, and they were adduced as arguments to prove the justice and utility of the massacre. After three days the slaughter ceased by royal mandate,¹ when the king went to the parliament, and held a bed of justice. He there declared that after an uninterrupted succession of revolts and treasonable acts against the throne, which had been a thousand times pardoned, Coligny crowned his crimes by a determination to exterminate himself, the queen-mother, the Dukes of Anjou and Alençon, and the King of Navarre, although the last belonged to his party; that, after these assassinations, the admiral had intended to proclaim the Prince of Condé king; but

¹ Sully makes the number of victims 70,000,—Péréfixe raises the number to 100,000.

his reign was only to be temporary, as Coligny had marked him out as an early victim, and when he had thus destroyed the whole of the royal family, he had resolved to place the sceptre in his own hands. In this insidious harangue, there was not a particle of truth; had there been any evidence of such a conspiracy, the king might easily have condemned the admiral judicially, and executed him as a traitor. So wretched an attempt at justification only increases the guilt of those who planned the massacre of Saint Bartholomew.

Charles adopted a similar plan to exculpate himself with foreign courts, to whom he wrote, stating that he was compelled to adopt these sanguinary measures in order to disconcert the machinations of the Huguenots; as if it were possible that all who suffered had conspired, and that even their assumed leaders had taken no precautions for their own personal safety.

The sensation produced in different countries was extremely different. Fénelon, then ambassador in England, blushed at being a Frenchman, when he found himself compelled to present to the queen the dispatches of his master, which represented this monstrous act of treason against his subjects as an act of prudence. When he attended the hall of audience, the whole court were arrayed in deep mourning; a gloomy silence was preserved; no friendly eye was turned towards him; every countenance was mournful and downcast. He approached the queen, who neither rose from her throne nor extended her hand, according to the courtesy of the times. Elizabeth read the documents with marked displeasure,

manifested her astonishment and indignation, blamed the council of France, and expressed her pity for the king.¹

A cry of horror rang through Germany. Many writings were there published, all denouncing the massacre, which was characterized as a compound of trickery, perfidy, and wickedness, exceeding in turpitude all that had ever been perpetrated in the annals of tyranny. The court of France was the more sensitive to these animadversions, as they were then negotiating to secure the crown of Poland for the Duke of Anjou, and the prejudices and antipathies excited among the Germans were calculated to frustrate their expectations. A deputation was sent to the Protestant princes to disarm their resentment. The pleas of justification were various; some excused the whole transaction, others only defended a part, but all insisted on the necessity of the massacre itself, on account of the regicidal intentions of the admiral, as a crime proved to the full satisfaction of the parliament, whose sentence was held to be conclusive and incontrovertible. These explanations and apologies produced but little effect in Germany, where the assassins of the Calvinists were still held in abhorrence by the vast majority of the people.

Intelligence of the murder of Coligny and his associates was received at Rome with acclamations of joy. Cannon were fired, bonfires lighted, and the city was illuminated, as if to celebrate some most glorious achievement. A solemn mass was performed, at which Pope Gregory XII. officiated, with all the imposing ceremonies peculiar to the church of Rome.

¹ Condillac, tom. xiii. p. 184.

The Cardinal of Lorraine largely rewarded the courier who brought the news. Brantome declares that the sovereign pontiff shed tears when he heard a detail of the excesses committed. "I cannot but weep," said his holiness, "when I reflect how many of the innocent perished with the guilty; and the more so when I consider that many of the guilty, had they lived longer, might have repented and made their peace with God."¹ "A sentiment of compassion," observes Anquetil, "not incompatible with those public demonstrations which policy required, whilst pity, at the bottom of his heart, vindicated the rights of humanity, so fearfully outraged."² This surely is a dangerous morality, which permits in public what is condemned in privacy, which distinguishes between the natural and the artificial man, and throws the mantle of hypocrisy over the spotless form of virtue.³

It was at Madrid that the horrible crime was welcomed with the loudest plaudits: Philip then showed for the first time that he was sensible to joy. He had given no outward sign of pleasure when he heard of the great naval victory of Lepanto over the Turks, but his sombre gravity now forsook him, and his black heart gloated with delight over the streams of blood that had reddened the streets of Paris. He made munificent presents to the courier, wrote an autograph letter of congratulation to Charles IX., caroused with

¹ Brantome, tom. ix. p. 190. ² *Esprit de la Ligue*, t. i. p. 312.

³ A medal was struck at Rome to commemorate the massacre. On one side was the head of Pope Gregory, on the other, an exterminating angel, striking down the Huguenots, some of whom were represented as fleeing from his wrath, while others were being trampled under his feet. It had the following brief inscription: "HUGONOTORUM STRAGES."

his courtiers,—rejoiced in public, and summoned all the functionaries of the state to wait on him and tender their felicitations. The admiral of Castile read the French dispatches at a table, at which the Duke de l'Infantado was seated. "Were Coligny and his friends Christians?" ingenuously asked that young prince. "Undoubtedly, they were," replied the admiral. "Why then, since they were Christians, were they butchered like wild beasts?" "Gently, my prince," said the admiral, "know you not that the war of France is the peace of Spain?"¹

It is extremely difficult to decide at what date the massacre of St. Bartholomew was really decided upon. The more zealous of the Calvinist writers unhesitatingly state that it was plotted at Bayonne, when Catharine and the royal family assembled in that city with the Duke of Alva and the Spanish envoys. This, however, seems to be an unfounded suspicion; and the better opinion is, that those conferences related to an alliance between the pope, France, and Austria, to extirpate the Protestant party by open warfare. At any rate, there is no certainty whatever that the massacre, which was executed eight years afterwards, was resolved upon at these interviews.

Equally embarrassing is it to determine the real extent of criminality which historical justice ought to impute to Charles, though the guilt of Catharine is cumulative and unequivocal. If we are to believe the Memoirs of Villeroi, who gives Miron, the physician of the Duke of Anjou, for his authority, and whose statement has been already quoted, it would

¹ Brantome, tom. ix. p. 189.

seem that Charles had no knowledge of the conspiracy, till after Coligny had been wounded by Maurevel; and, moreover, that his resolution was only formed after Catharine had avowed that she herself, and the Duke of Anjou had authorized the assassination. It certainly does not appear probable that the Duke of Anjou, were the fact true, would ever have made his physician the confidant of so dishonouring a secret, or branded himself with eternal infamy to preserve the character of a brother by whom he was distrusted, envied, and ultimately hated. Again: Villeroy was a furious partizan, and many of his declarations are so rash and intemperate, that little confidence can be placed in his veracity. He accuses Coligny, without the least reserve or qualification, of having intended to murder the king,¹ of which there is not a shadow of proof; and stigmatizes his memory, by saying, that all the great actions which he performed, were against his God, his religion, his country, and his sovereign.

There is the strongest evidence to show that Charles invited Coligny to Paris for the express purpose of putting him to death. The historian Mathieu affirms that the king deceived the admiral from the first to the last.² Sully declares, that though the Guises were ostensibly slighted, and had even retired from the court, yet they were twice discovered in masks, conversing with the king, the queen-mother, the Duke of Retz, and the Chancellor de Birague.³ When the marriage of the Prince of Bearn and Margaret of Valois was first spoken of,

¹ Villeroy, tom. iv. 325, 340. ² Mathieu, tom. i. lib. 6.

³ Sully, tom. i. p. 32.

the pope protested against the union, declaring that he would never grant a dispensation; and with a view to prevent their union, he dispatched his nephew, Cardinal Alexandrino, to Paris, with the authority of legate, instructing him to remonstrate with the king against the heretical alliance. The cardinal acted up to the very letter of his orders, and pressed Charles so closely, that he scarcely knew how to reply. At length, labouring under great apparent embarrassment, he said, "Would to God, Sir Cardinal, that I could tell you all: you will, however, soon know as well as the sovereign pontiff, that there is nothing more calculated to establish true religion in France and exterminate its enemies, than this marriage. Yes," he continued, warmly pressing the cardinal's hand, "believe my royal word; yet a little time, and the holy father himself will praise my plans, my piety, my devotion to the true faith." Having thus expressed himself, he attempted to slip a valuable diamond ring on the finger of the legate; but the prelate declined it, thanked his majesty, and said that he was perfectly satisfied with his royal word.¹

It is true that this conversation rests on the authority of Italian writers, and De Thou gives a general caution to distrust their statements; but he does not say that they are wholly unworthy of credit; and even if he had done so, the sweeping illiberality of the sentiment would have been its own condemnation. It was Pius V. who refused the dispensation: he died in April, 1571, and was succeeded by Gregory XIII.; the Cardinal of Lorraine per-

¹ Davila, p. 177.

sualed him to sanction the marriage: is it not then reasonable to infer that Charles IX. did give the pledge mentioned to the legate, and that that pledge was confirmed by the Cardinal of Lorraine? Surely the sovereign pontiff would not have sanctioned this heretical alliance without a strong motive; and what assignable motive was there, but the promised extirpation of the Huguenots?

The duplicity of Charles was tortuous and subtle beyond his age. With all his professions of esteem towards the admiral and his friends, the sincerity of his heart was suspected by many. It is well known, says Sully, that the king one day said to Catharine, "Do I not play my part well?" To which she answered, "Very well, my son, but you must hold out to the end."¹ There is no meaning in language, unless expressions such as these are received as cumulating proofs of guilt.

That the massacre was perpetrated at an earlier date than Charles intended, and that it was more extensive than he had originally designed, is probable. That the admiral had produced some slightly favourable impression on his mind, from the flattering confidence he placed in his royal word and honour, may be admitted; moreover, Coligny had kindled his ambition, and urged him to assert his independence of his mother; he had exhorted him to accompany the army to Flanders, and not allow the Duke of Anjou to gather the laurels due to himself, as his brother had already done at Jarnac and Montcontour; and as these admonitions precisely accorded with those the king had formerly received from the

¹ Sully, tom. i. p. 22.

Cardinal of Lorraine, they were the more calculated to produce a deep impression. It was this very advice that Coligny whispered into the ear of Charles at their last interview, after he was wounded; and though Catharine heard it not, her conscience, ever timid, roused her to the sense of immediate danger: she feared that if she once lost her hold on her son, she would never regain her influence, and this it was that urged her to insist on the immediate execution of the massacre. But the deed itself had been long resolved upon, though the day had not been fixed, and in the premeditation of the murderous outrage the mother and the son were equally guilty.

Whatever expectations the court might have entertained of the pacificatory results of the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, they were miserably disappointed. The slaughter of men, women, and children neither extinguished principles, settled controverted points of doctrine, or weakened the right of private judgment; moreover, extensive as it was, it was far from being complete. Many of the Huguenots had saved themselves in England, in Germany, and the Low Countries, where their presence excited the pity and roused the indignation of their fellow Protestants. Others, who could not escape from France, had fortified themselves at Montauban, Nîmes, and Rochelle, and these three towns formed themselves into a confederation, declaring their union an independent republic. The party, far from being crushed, soon amounted to eighteen thousand armed men, and became masters of a hundred towns, castles, and fortresses. So great was the sympathy excited in England for the cause of the French re-

formers, that Condillac¹ states that the nobility offered to raise twenty thousand infantry and four thousand cavalry, land them in France, and maintain them for six months at their own expense: but Elizabeth, disapproving of this chivalrous crusade, prohibited the expedition.

The fourth religious war now commenced, and a royal army, under the command of Marshal Biron, marched to Rochelle, the strongest town belonging to the confederates, possessing every facility of receiving aid from England, by its position on the sea-coast, and remarkably strong both by nature and art. It was surrounded by marshes, which extended several miles, and there was only one road to the city, which was on the north side; the entrance-gate was fortified with moats, walls, bulwarks, and ramparts; and these were so judiciously arranged, flanking and guarding each other, that the place was deemed almost impregnable. The harbour is approachable with almost any wind, and the shore is so shelving, that a blockading squadron cannot with safety ride there long at anchor, in consequence of the frequent and violent gales that prevail in that quarter. The garrison was composed of fifteen hundred regular soldiers, and two thousand citizens, highly disciplined and inured to arms; besides, they were animated by those elevated and elevating principles of liberty, to which the mere mercenary is insensible. The inhabitants bade defiance to their enemies, and saw without dismay the main army encamp under their walls, led by the Duke of Anjou, accompanied by his brother, the Duke of

¹ Tom. xiii. p. 186.

Alençon, the flower of the nobility, and even the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé. The siege commenced in the first days of February, but every attack was vigorously repulsed.

In the prosecution of this war, the conduct of the king was most extraordinary. La Noue, a fearless soldier, a skilful general, and a zealous Protestant, had escaped the massacre, being at the time absent in the Low Countries, whither he had been sent by Coligny to collect such intelligence as might be useful before the campaign in Flanders was commenced. On his return to France, Charles received him with open arms, and gave him the estates of Teligny, his brother-in-law, all of which had been confiscated. The king entreated La Noue, who, in the preceding wars, had commanded at Rochelle, to use his influence with the inhabitants to accept terms of peace, which, at first, he peremptorily refused to do; but, after a long struggle, yielding to the importunities of the king, and influenced by the hope of being serviceable to his party, he accepted this delicate commission, and executed it in a manner that commanded universal admiration.

When La Noue reached a village immediately contiguous to Rochelle, he sent a messenger to announce his arrival, and requested a conference with the deputies of the town. They presented themselves, but feared that some treason lurked beneath his overtures. Their answer left him the choice of one of three alternatives; either a safe passage to England,—a residence in Rochelle as a private individual,—or the governorship of the city, with the command of the troops. He determined to accept the office of their general.

There was no order among the royalists, no unity of action, no combination of plans; each officer acted as he pleased, and the results were defeat and disgrace. The Duke of Aumale was shot in the trenches, and many prisoners taken by the Rochelois, among others, Cosseins, who had broken open the house of the admiral on the night of his assassination, and on whom they took an ample revenge. The Calvinist preachers completely swayed the inhabitants of the town, and one of them, named La Place, in the excess of a frantic zeal, accused La Noue of being a traitor, and even struck him in the face,¹ to which the governor had the manliness to submit, rather than injure the cause of religious liberty: but he determined to quit a post which he could not fill with satisfaction, and availing himself of a *sortie*, he went over to the Duke of Anjou. But though the beleaguered city thus lost its general, the resistance continued as undaunted as when he held the command, the courage and fortitude of the people being sustained by James Henry, the major, and Arendel, his lieutenant, an officer of great skill and prudence.

What the result of the siege might have been, had military discipline been observed by the besiegers, is extremely doubtful, for it is certain they sacrificed many advantages through their moral disorganization. The Duke of Anjou, on hearing that the negotiations opened to secure to himself the crown of Poland wore a most favourable aspect, at once forgot all his duty to France, and passed his time with his favourites in planning schemes of pleasure and magnificence on his installation at Warsaw. As an additional misfortune to the royalists, an epidemic broke

¹ Davila, p. 191.

out among the troops, and forty thousand men perished in this expedition by the sword and by disease. The exhausted state of the royal exchequer compelled the cessation of hostilities; and on the 6th of July, 1573, a treaty of peace was signed, which guaranteed to the inhabitants of Rochelle, Montauban, and Nîmes the free exercise of their religion. Marshal Biron was appointed titular governor of Rochelle, for no garrison was allowed, and tranquillity was once more restored.

The election of the Duke of Anjou having been now confirmed, that prince took his departure for Poland, and his absence was the signal for fresh cabals at the court. His brother, the Duke of Alençon, assumed the title of Duke of Anjou, and claimed the rank of lieutenant-general of the kingdom, which Catharine refused him. He at once allied himself with the discontented party, at the head of which were the Montmorencies, whose disaffection proceeded from two causes. In the first place, as relations of Admiral Coligny, they were deeply incensed at his cruel and cowardly assassination; and their resentment was the more fiercely kindled on account of the indignities offered to his mutilated body, which they considered an insult to their own blood. Secondly, they mortally hated the Princes of Lorraine, whose influence had stripped the Montmorencies of that military sway which the family had enjoyed under so many reigns, and which they deemed to be a matter of hereditary right. The King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé joined this cabal, with very many of the young Catholic nobility, who pitied Coligny as a brave warrior, and

detested the Guises, for endeavouring to monopolize all the honours and emoluments of the court for themselves and their favourites. To these were added many who complained of the pressure of taxation. This mixed party, thus united together by various motives, were called the **POLITICALS** or **MAL-CONTENTS**.

The enterprise they intended to execute was called the conspiracy of Shrove Tuesday, because the designs of the conspirators were to have been carried into effect on that day; but, through bad management, it failed. The object was to enable the Duke of Anjou and the princes of the blood to escape from Saint Germain, where the court resided, and where they were strictly, though secretly, watched. Having possessed themselves of some strong towns, and being supported by the Calvinists and the discontented Catholics, they intended to proclaim the Duke of Anjou lieutenant-general of the kingdom, and compel the Guises to give an account of their administration. These were the ostensible motives to insurrection; but Sully intimates that the real object was to secure the throne to the Duke of Anjou, Charles IX. being then dangerously ill, and the King of Poland being absent.

Catharine had always evinced a marked partiality for her second son, and she now employed both cunning and force to secure him the succession. La Molle and Coconnas, partizans of the Duke of Anjou, and respectively the favourites of the Queen of Navarre and the Duchess of Nevers, were beheaded; Marshals Montmorenci and De Cossé were arrested, and imprisoned in the Bastille; guards were ap-

pointed to watch the movements of the Duke of Anjou and the King of Navarre; the Prince of Condé fled to Germany. The Count of Montgomeri, the same who mortally wounded Henry II. in a tournament, was taken prisoner in Normandy, brought to Paris, and beheaded by the vindictive Catharine, who had never pardoned him, though he was morally innocent of the death of her husband.

Charles IX. was now about to descend to an early grave. He had not naturally a bad heart, but his passions were excessively violent. Evil example, wicked counsellors, a depraved mother, and a vicious education, made him the curse of his people and the opprobrium of humanity. His chief accomplishment, for which he was indebted to his profane associates, was a faculty of using oaths of a most indecent and impious character; and yet he ordered the massacre of Saint Bartholomew from zeal for religion. Such is the wayward infatuation of man! This prince was not deficient in polite literature, in which he had been instructed by Amyot; but the pestilential atmosphere of his bigoted court soon banished the lessons of morality which he had received from his preceptor, and he retained nothing but a perception of the beautiful in the style of the ancient authors.

His last hours were embittered by that remorse which ever agonizes the conscience of the dying sinner. From the evening of the fatal 24th of August, he was observed to be gloomy and wretched, and was heard to groan involuntarily at the recollection of the horrors he had perpetrated. His

physician, Ambrose Paré, though a Huguenot, possessed a greater share of his confidence than any other person, and to him he freely disclosed the tortures of his soul. "Ambrose," said the king, "I know not what has happened to me during these two or three past days, but I feel my mind and body as much at enmity with each other as if I was seized with fever: sleeping or waking, the murdered Huguenots seem ever present to my eyes, with ghastly faces, and weltering in their blood. I wish the innocent and the helpless had been spared."¹ It is pleasing to record these expressions of repentance, for it shows that humanity can never be wholly spoliated of her rights.

The King of Navarre witnessed the death of Charles IX. The expiring monarch called his kinsman to the side of his bed, and recommended his wife and infant daughter to his protection: at that solemn hour he appreciated the noble mind and sterling integrity of a prince whom he had so bitterly outraged. He cautioned him to distrust; but he whispered the name so faintly that no one heard it but the King of Navarre. "My son, you should not speak thus," observed Catharine, who was present. "Why not?" replied Charles; "it is perfectly true."² He expired on the 30th of May, 1574, bathed in his blood, which oozed out from every pore. Vol-

¹ Sully, tom. i. p. 43.

² In the notes to the *Henriade* it is said that Charles alluded to the King of Poland. Cayet makes Catharine the object of the allusion.

taire thus finely describes his death in the third canto of the *Henriade* :—

Dieu déployant sur lui sa vengeance sévère
Marqua ce roi mourant du sceau de sa colère.
Je le vis expirant ; cette image effrayante
A mes yeux attendris semble être encore présente.
Son sang, à gros bouillons de son corps élançé,
Vengeait le sang Français par ces ordres versé.”

REIGN OF HENRY III.

HENRY III. received intelligence of the death of his brother within fourteen days after his arrival in Poland. The austere behaviour of his new subjects had, even in that brief period, made him regret the licentious profligacy of Paris; and his companions, young libertines from twenty to twenty-five years of age, disgusted with the restraints of virtue and decency, to which they had never been habituated, eagerly desired to return to France. The wishes of the master corresponded with those of the favourites; but the king, fearing that the Poles might remonstrate against his departure, or even compel him to remain by force, stealthily fled from his palace on a dark night, and in less than two days reached the frontiers of the empire. He thus abandoned, as a fugitive, a crown he had obtained by intrigue and bribery.

On his homeward journey he visited Venice, where he was received with princely honours by that proud republic, and the Doge strongly urged him to treat the Calvinists with justice and tenderness. He loitered away his time in frivolous pleasures while passing through the principal towns of Italy, and at the court of Turin he imbibed those pernicious maxims which disorganized France, and terminated in his own assassination. He reached Paris

in September, having quitted Poland in the middle of June.

It was during this interval that Catharine, who exercised the full powers of regent, had put La Molle, Coconnas, and Montgommeri to death, imprisoned the Marshals Montmorenci and De Cossé in the Bastille, and lodged the Duke of Anjou and the King of Navarre in the Bastille. Thus the king, on arriving in his capital, found the seeds of civil war again sown; and amid the hireling shouts of gratulation which hailed his presence, he heard the suppressed murmurs of sedition and discontent. Had Henry possessed sufficient strength of mind to emancipate himself from the trammels of his artful mother, or that decision of character which promptly executes what has been maturely decided upon, he might have secured the peace of his subjects, and reigned with honour; but he had neither firmness nor foresight, and abandoned himself to parasites and flatterers, who disgraced the throne by their vices, and impoverished the people by their prodigality and extortion. Henry, however, did immediately one act of mercy—he liberated his brother, who again took his first title of Duke of Alençon, and the King of Navarre, from the Bastille; but they remained under the surveillance of a secret guard.

The civil wars which convulsed the reign of Charles IX. had produced a remarkable influence on the feelings and conduct of the nobility, while the massacre of Saint Bartholomew had operated most powerfully on the passions of the people. The courtiers, though still acknowledging the king as the

supreme chief of the monarchy, did so rather from precedent than loyalty; the leading men, such as the Guises and Montmorencies, placed themselves at the head of the oligarchial sections, and their immediate dependents familiarly and habitually spoke of them as their *masters*: the homage due to the crown was thus silently transferred to individuals, and a species of Scottish clanship established even within the walls of the Louvre. The immediate results of this divided allegiance were constant quarrels, frequent duels, jealousies and hatreds, secret slanders, and the generation of all those disuniting influences which enervate the prime strength of a nation, by arraying the principal families and their partizans in hostile attitude against each other. The lower apartments of the palace were crowded every morning with the rival courtiers, who passed their time in fencing, firing pistols, cutting blocks of wood with sabres, and inflaming their passions by recounting fictitious feats of arms, of which each speaker described himself as the hero.

The female character became vicious and depraved: chastity was laughed at, and the matronly virtues were treated with scorn. All the rational principles of action were made to yield to the animal passions. To such a ridiculous height had devotion to the fair sex risen, that any gallant of the court, at the slightest intimation from his mistress, would plunge into a deep river, though unable to swim. The young men, under the same influence, would enter the woods to encounter wild boars and wolves, that they might exhibit the spoils, in proof of their foolhardiness: nor did they hesitate to stab themselves

with daggers, till they were covered with blood, and often so severely injured as to require surgical attendance. This obedience to the caprices of the ladies, at once farcical and insane, was received as the proof of affection, and that affection met with an immoral reward.

The massacre of Saint Bartholomew had produced a most fearful demoralizing influence on the common people. They had seen blood flow in torrents, the butchery of old and young, of mothers and infants; they knew that the slaughter had been ordered by royal authority, and that the chief executioners included the first noblemen in the land. They had further been assured by the priests, that the murder of heretics was not only lawful in the eye of man, but acceptable in the sight of God; that it was even sinful to show them mercy, and that their extermination was the surest passport to salvation. The ignorant populace, infatuated with religious frenzy, recognized no other law than the law of the strongest, and the arbiter of their disputes was the dagger or the bullet. Thus was fostered a ferocious and sanguinary character, which made the vulgar the willing instruments of their superiors, equally ready to peril their own lives or assail those of their neighbours.

With so many elements of discord, and such an uncompromising spirit of rivalry among the courtiers, it was impossible that peace could be maintained. The first insurrectionary movement in this reign was the confederation of Millaud, so called from a town in the Rouergue. The Prince of Condé, though absent in Germany collecting levies, with

which to commence a civil war, was the head of this association. The confederates bound themselves by oath to two distinct articles; in the first place, the political malcontents covenanted not to lay down their arms till the Calvinists were secured in the full and free exercise of their religion. The Calvinists, on their part, pledged themselves neither to make peace nor truce till the Marshals Montmorenci and De Cossé were released from captivity. They further agreed to insist on a complete reform of the government, the punishment of all who had disturbed the public tranquillity, and the reduction of taxes.

The confederates, having no recognized chief in the country, attempted to attach to their cause Damville, governor of Languedoc, second son of the late Constable Montmorenci. He was a man of mild and pacific temperament, but possessed of the most shrewd penetration: from kindness of heart he had never persecuted the Calvinists, though a sense of his own interest prevented him from showing them any open favour. Other provincial governors, especially Montluc, had cruelly punished the heretics; and the lukewarmness of Damville, compared with his zeal, had excited the suspicions of Catherine, who had frequently tried, though without success, to deprive him of his command. He was well aware of her secret machinations, which by consummate tact he had thwarted, and he would probably have continued to act on the defensive, had he not been roused to resistance by the imprisonment of his elder brother, for he clearly saw that this attack would be followed up, till the whole of his family

were prostrate at the feet of the Guises. In addition to these motives, Damville having fallen sick, suspected that he had been poisoned, and thus believing his own life to be in danger, he accepted the overtures of the confederates, and signed the declaration of Millaud.

The fifth civil war now broke out, and the insolence of the revolters knew no bounds. As a specimen of their audacity, we cite the answer of Montbrun, a gentleman of Picardy, to the king, when called upon to surrender some Catholic prisoners, who had fallen into his power. "What!" said he, "does the king presume to write to me in the capacity of king, as if I were bound to recognize him in that character? I wish him to understand that that is all very well in time of peace; but in time of war, when the sword is in my hand, and my foot in the stirrup, all the world are equal, and I know no such superior."¹

The royal army marched against Livron, where Henry lost the laurels he had gained at Jarnac and Montcontour: the besieged loaded him with reproaches, and he was literally hooted from the walls. The siege was raised almost as soon as commenced, and the retreat was most ignominious. The fact is, that the old officers, seeing themselves superseded in the confidence of his majesty by inexperienced youths, whose only title to preferment was their libertinism, showed no zeal for a service in which they were dishonoured; and the Calvinists,

¹ Montbrun was shortly afterwards taken prisoner, tried, condemned, and executed at Grenoble, on the charge of having plundered the royal carriages and servants.—*Davila*, p. 212.

profiting by these dissensions, so strengthened their position as to set the whole power of the crown at defiance.

At this juncture died the Cardinal of Lorraine, whose pernicious counsels and inordinate ambition had bathed France in blood. He possessed great talents, which he devoted to the aggrandizement of his family. He was the centre of a circle, and his relations bounded its circumference: no thoughts of national utility ever, even transiently, crossed his mind, or entered into the conceptions of his policy: he made use of religion as the ladder of his ambition; he embroiled the members of the royal family with each other, while he directed their concentrated fury against the best subjects of the monarchy. He was a priest without piety, and a statesman without honour; a libertine by temperament, and a hypocrite by habit; avaricious, unfeeling, treacherous; concealing, under an engaging air of simulated candour, a black heart and a malignant and revengeful spirit.

The death of the Cardinal of Lorraine was followed by the marriage of the king. In the month of February, 1575, the day after his coronation at Rheims, he espoused Louisa of Lorraine, daughter of Nicolas, Duke of Mercœur and Count of Vaudemont. The historian Mathieu gives this princess great praise for her virtue and attachment to her husband, but she was always melancholy in the midst of splendour, having conceived an early affection for the brother of the Count of Salm, and the cankerworm of disappointed love blighted all her hopes of happiness. She may be

added to the numerous victims of mercenary marriages.

The wily Catharine, acting on her favourite maxim, "divide and govern," was now exerting herself to create disunion between the duke of Alençon and the King of Navarre, to each of whom she had secretly promised the high post of lieutenant-general of the kingdom. She suspected, and her suspicion was just, that these two princes had entered into some coalition, and her object was to convert their friendship into enmity. She was the more inclined to pursue this plan in consequence of the confederation of Nîmes, which was an extension of the confederation of Millaud, but more clearly defined in its purpose, and more powerfully organized in its means. The confederation of Nîmes, in fact, established a separate and independent republic within the monarchy; recognized chiefs were appointed, duties levied, and laws for the administration of justice framed; while certain rules were enacted for the discipline of the troops, the transactions of trade, and the exercise of the reformed religion. The several parties to this league mutually and reciprocally bound themselves not to open any negotiations with the royal government, unless with the unanimous consent of all the confederates, and this clause they observed with rigid fidelity.

While these events were passing, the court was divided into factions, and many hoped to gain favour with the king by insulting his brother, who only waited an opportunity to take his revenge. Henry, on the other hand, who had lost all his early courage, desired to get rid of his enemies by assassination,

and on hearing of a report that Damville had died in Languedoc, he gave orders to strangle Marshals Montmorenci and De Cossé in the Bastile; and these murders would have been perpetrated had he not been persuaded to wait a few days, to ascertain if the rumour was founded in truth. However, the intention was soon publicly known, and roused the indignation of the numerous and powerful friends of the prisoners.

The Duke of Alençon at last found an opportunity to escape from the court. He fled in disguise on the 17th of September, reached Dreux, and saw himself at the head of a formidable party. He was joined by the Prince of Condé, who had brought a considerable number of German auxiliaries into France; and the confederates, now having two princes of the blood as their chiefs, openly bearded the government. Other reinforcements were advancing under Thoré, brother of the Duke of Montmorenci, who preceded the main army of Casimir, prince palatine; and Catharine was so alarmed lest these several forces should concentrate themselves, that she sent word to Thoré, that unless he retreated, she would send him the head of his brother. He answered, "If the queen-mother dare to put her menace into execution, there is no part of France in which I will not leave marks of my vengeance." This firmness quite changed the tone of the court; Montmorenci and De Cossé were liberated from the Bastile, and their mediation was requested to accommodate matters with the Duke of Alençon. In the meantime the Duke of Guise, who was governor of Champagne, marched against the Germans

under Thoré, and signally defeated them at Langres. He received a severe wound in the cheek, the scar of which remained during his life, from which circumstance he was popularly called the "Balaféré."

The court expected that this defeat would have disheartened the confederates; but they continued firm, and the only concession they made was a truce for seven months, to commence on the 22d of November, and terminate on the 25th of June. They also annexed advantageous conditions to this arrangement; the king agreed to pay a considerable indemnification to Casimir,—to deliver to the Calvinists and malcontent Catholics six towns, to wit, Angoulême, Niort, La Charité, Bourges, Saumur, and Mézières,—to pay the garrisons placed in them by the Duke of Alençon and the Prince of Condé,—and to keep for the former a body-guard of Swiss, mounted gendarmes and arquebusiers. The only cover to this discreditable treaty between a king and his revolted subjects, was a clause that these towns should be given up at the end of the seven months, whether peace was continued or not; but in either case the clause must have been known to be illusory; for had peace been resolved upon, the confederates would assuredly have retained them as guarantees against its infraction, and had war broken out again at the termination of the armistice, they would only have surrendered them by compulsion.

The deputies of the confederates assembled in Paris, in January, 1576, and there opened negotiations with the royal commissioners. A dispute soon arose, for the governors of Angoulême and Bourges positively refused to deliver up those towns

to the Calvinists; and after some delay, they received in lieu of them Cognac and Saint Jean D'Angely, which were of much less importance. This violation of the articles of the truce was the pretext for continuing hostilities. Casimir and Condé entered Champagne in February, crossed Burgundy, and on the first of March effected their junction with the Duke of Alençon in the Bourbonnais, when the latter was declared generalissimo of the confederates. The rebellion now assumed a formidable character, and the escape of the King of Navarre from the court rendered it still more alarming. Catharine always evading the execution of her promise to appoint him lieutenant-general of the kingdom, Henry at length saw that he was the dupe of her artifices, and determined to assert his independence: he availed himself of a hunting-excur- sion to Senlis, to elude the vigilance of his guards, and joined the confederates, whose united forces, according to Sully, now amounted to fifty thousand men, but Davila reduces the number to thirty-five thousand.

Though the Duke of Alençon and the King of Navarre had combined together against the crown, they were jealous of each other; both had aspired to the favours of the celebrated Madame De Sauve, and both had enjoyed them; both had endeavoured to assume the chief military command of the nation, and both had failed; each now claimed absolute control over the confederates, and this personal rivalry disunited a force which otherwise might have dictated its own terms to the government. The King of Navarre openly professed himself a Pro-

testant, declaring that his recantation after the massacre of Saint Bartholomew had been extorted by force, and that he had always in his conscience been a Calvinist. This declaration at once gave him a complete ascendancy over the Huguenots; and as he had the full support of the Prince of Condé, his cousin, the Duke of Alençon had sagacity enough to see that he could only play a secondary part in the political drama. This consideration induced him to listen favourably to the overtures of Catharine, who used every art to detach him from the coalition; and this profligate woman succeeded in winning over her son, through the agency of the abandoned beauties of the court. Peace was resolved upon and ratified by a decree signed by the king, and dated the 14th of May, 1576.

The concessions made to the confederates were extensive and advantageous. An amnesty for the past,—full liberty of conscience,—the free exercise of religion, without exceptions of times or places,—the power of erecting schools or colleges, of convening synods, of performing marriage, and of administering the sacraments, were among the chief clauses of the treaty. All members of the reformed religion were declared eligible to any office of state, and capable of enjoying any dignity or quality whatsoever, while the distinction and precedence, formerly yielded to the Catholics, were abolished. Promises were made to establish a court of justice in every parliament, jointly and equally composed of Catholics and Protestants. The sentences against Coligny and Montgommeri were revoked and declared null and void, and their de-

scendants were reinstated in all their family honours. Berry, Touraine, and Anjou, three of the largest and most fertile provinces in France, with an annual pension of one hundred thousand crowns, were awarded to the Duke of Alençon, as his *apanage*. The Prince of Condé received the government of Picardy with the city of Peronne. The principality of Chateau-Thierry was allotted to Casimir, with a pension of fourteen thousand crowns, and the payment of all the arrears due to the German army was promised, amounting to twelve millions of ducats.

The confederates committed an unpardonable error in signing this treaty, for the least shrewd among them must have been certain that concessions so ample would never be executed. Davila openly confesses that the court never intended to fulfil their engagements; that all they aimed at was the return of the army of Casimir to Germany, and the withdrawal of the Duke of Alençon from the coalition. Sully, speaking of Catharine, observes, "She offered more than we thought we could demand; promises cost that artful princess nothing: thus all things fell out as she wished, for, in making this peace, she had nothing in view but the disunion of her enemies." Catharine had also calculated on the resistance which the Roman Catholic party would make to the treaty, when its terms were made known; nor was she disappointed in it; for it was denounced by the whole party with rage and indignation. That it was impious and unlawful to keep good faith with heretics, had long been preached as a popular doctrine; and now that money

was to be paid, towns surrendered, and equality of civil rights established, none scrupled to declare the articles of pacification null and void. Not one of them was executed.

Two years had only elapsed since the accession of Henry III., and he was loaded with dishonour. The Polish diet had expelled him from the throne of their country with the most degrading marks of infamy, and he now slumbered on the throne of France, while its foundations were crumbling into dust. He was hated by the Calvinists for his breaches of faith; he was despised by the Catholics for his imbecility. The substance of royalty had departed from him, and nothing but the shadow remained. Openly bearded by the Huguenots, while the Guises secretly conspired against his authority and even his personal liberty, this miserable descendant of the house of Valois saw none but enemies abroad and traitors at home. His only friends, if friendship can be applied to such characters, were young libertines, the companions of his profligacies, whose extravagances and constant demands for money put the seal to his unpopularity.¹ As the Catholics placed no confidence in the king, they determined to form a confederacy for their own pro-

¹ Such was the contempt into which the king had fallen, that the following placard was posted on the walls of the Louvre: "Henri, par la grace de sa mere, inutile roi de France et de Pologne, imaginaire concierge du Louvre, marguillier de Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, bateleur des eglises de Paris, gendre de Colas, goudronneur des collets de sa femme et friseur de ses cheveux, mercier du palais, visiteur d'estuves, gardien des quatre mendians, père conscript des blancs battus, et protecteur des capucins."

tection, and this celebrated association is known in the history of the religious wars of France, as the LEAGUE. It originated in Picardy with James, Lord of Humieres, governor of Peronne, Montdidier, and Roye, a gentleman of great wealth and influence, who had private causes of quarrel against the Montmorencies, on various accounts, and was now animated with fury against the Prince of Condé, to whom Peronne had been allotted by one of the articles of the recent treaty. His example soon spread throughout the whole of Picardy, and was quickly imitated in other provinces. Henry, Duke of Guise, was the recognized chief of this association, which, under the pretext of religion, became a political engine to promote the ambitious views of the princes of Lorraine.

The covenant of the league was drawn up in the following terms :—

“ In the name of the most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, our only true God, to whom be glory and honour. The covenant of the princes, lords, and gentlemen of the Catholic religion ought to be made ; and it is hereby made, to establish the law of God in its purity, and to restore and settle his holy service according to the form and manner of the Catholic Apostolic Roman Church, abjuring and renouncing all errors contrary to it.

“ Secondly, it is made to preserve to King Henry, the third of that name, and his successors the most Christian kings, the state, honour, authority, duty, service, and obedience, owed by his and their subjects, as the same are contained in those articles which shall be presented to him in the assembly of the states,

and which he swore and promised to observe at the time of his consecration and coronation, with a solemn protestation not to do any act against what shall be ordained and settled by the states.

“ Thirdly, to restore unto the provinces of this kingdom, and to those other states which are under it, those ancient rights, pre-eminences, liberties, and privileges which *existed in the time of Clovis*, the first most Christian king, or others better and more profitable, (if any such can be found,) under the same protection.

“ In case there be any impediment, opposition, or rebellion against what has been premised, *be it from whom it will, or proceed from whencesoever it may*, those who enter into this covenant shall be bound and obliged to employ their lives and fortunes to punish, chastise, and prosecute those who may attempt to disturb it, or prevent its execution, and shall never cease their endeavours till the aforesaid things be done and perfected.

“ In case any of the confederates, their friends, vassals, or dependents be oppressed, molested, or questioned for this cause, *be it by whom it will*, they shall be bound to employ their persons, goods, and estates to take revenge upon those who shall have so molested them, either by the way of justice or force, without any exception of persons whatsoever.

“ If it shall come to pass that any man, after uniting himself by oath to this confederacy, should desire to depart from it, or separate himself on any excuse or pretence, (which God forbid,) such violaters of their own consciences shall be punished, both in their bodies and goods, by all means that can be

thought of, as enemies of God, and rebels and disturbers of the public peace; nor shall the aforesaid associates be liable to be questioned for any punishment they may inflict, either in public or private.

“The said associates shall likewise swear to yield ready obedience and faithful service unto that HEAD who shall be appointed; to follow and obey him, and to lend all help, counsel, and assistance, as well for the entire conservation and maintenance of this league, as for the ruin of all who may oppose it, without partiality or exception of persons; and those who shall fail or depart from it, shall be punished by the authority of the HEAD, and according to his orders; to which every confederate shall be obliged to submit himself.

“All the Catholics of the several cities, towns, and villages shall be secretly advertised and warned by the particular governors of places to enter into this league, and concur in the providing of men, arms, and other necessaries, every one according to his condition and ability.

“All the confederates shall be prohibited from stirring up any discord, or entering into any dispute among themselves, without leave of the HEAD, to whose arbitrament all dissensions shall be referred, as also the settlement of all differences, as well in matters of goods as of good name; and all of them shall be obliged to swear in the manner and form following:—

“I swear by God the Creator, (laying my hand on the holy gospel,) and under pain of excommunication and eternal damnation, that I enter into this holy Catholic league according to the form of that writing which has now been read unto me, and that

I do faithfully and sincerely enter into it with a will either to command or obey, as I shall be directed; and I promise, on my life and honour, to continue in it to the last drop of my blood, and not to depart from it, or transgress it for any command, pretence, excuse, or occasion which by any means whatsoever may be represented to me.”¹

The terms in which this instrument was drawn up, abundantly prove that the intention of the league was to depose the king and transfer all the regal authority to the Head whom they might appoint. The allusion to the liberties and privileges which existed in the time of Clovis, was intended to give, as occasion offered, very considerable latitude to the leaguers, as it clearly enabled them to extend their views from religious to political objects. It moreover gave a colourable pretence to the intended usurpation of the Duke of Guise, who was declared by the genealogists to be a descendant of Charlemagne, and in his person the ancient line of royalty was to be restored. The clause which bound the leaguers to pay implicit obedience to the chief appointed by the confederates, at once set aside the authority of the king and reduced him to a cipher; and as the chief elected was also to decide on all disputes, whether relating to property or character, he became invested with all the judicial functions of the state.

This conspiracy had been carried on with great circumspection, but Henry was not ignorant of its existence; and though unacquainted with the details and extent of the plot, he was aware that his

¹ Davila, p. 223.

personal honour and dignity were menaced with attack. It was under these circumstances that the first STATES of BLOIS were held on the 6th of December, 1576. The king comported himself with dignity on the occasion, for though habitually prone to frivolity, he could assume at pleasure a majestic mien and a commanding air. He pronounced an impressive speech with considerable feeling and energy, lamenting the discord of the country, the dilapidated state of the finances, and the general calamities of the kingdom. He dwelt strongly on the great exertions made by the queen-mother, during the minority of Charles IX., to reconcile conflicting interests, and maintain the efficiency of the government,—deprecatd the policy of putting down the Calvinists by the sword, which had been so often tried without success, and concluded by an affectionate appeal to all parties to make mutual concessions, and unite together for the conservation of the monarchy. The chancellor Birague re-echoed the sentiments of the king, and the three orders severally returned thanks to his majesty for his condescension, and the anxiety he had expressed for the welfare of his subjects; but these compliments were mere formalities, hollow, insidious, and insincere.

The Duke of Guise was not present at Blois, but the assembly was composed of men entirely devoted to his interests, and, though absent, he ruled. Had it been proposed to qualify the articles of the last peace, the king would have yielded his assent, but the demands of the leaguers were more extensive; for they insisted, after a short discussion, that there should be only

one religion, which was tantamount to a declaration of war against the Huguenots. Against this extreme resolution the king protested, on which it was proposed to nominate a council composed of judges, *not suspected by the states*, and twelve of the deputies, empowering them to adopt such measures as they might deem expedient, without the possibility of their being revoked by any other tribunal. The king had the firmness to resist this crafty proposition, which, had it been accepted, would have effectually despoiled him of his prerogative and made him the puppet of a faction.

The position of Henry was most embarrassing. He felt himself too feeble to resist the insolence of the league, and to yield was to abandon the throne. From this dilemma he hoped to extricate himself by a manœuvre which met with temporary success, but substantially only gave him the benefit of a delay. He proposed to the States to send deputies to the King of Navarre, the Prince of Condé, and the Marshal of D'Amville, admonishing them to disband their troops, and submit themselves to the wisdom and justice of the national representatives. This proposal was too gracious and reasonable to be rejected, and commissioners were appointed. The King of Navarre received them kindly, but protested against any force being put on his conscience, declaring his firm belief in the reformed creed, yet offering to abandon it, whenever his reason convinced him of being in error. He, however, refused to disarm his adherents, saying, that as he knew the league were prepared to attack him, he would stand on the defensive. The Prince of

Condé, of a more fiery temper than his cousin, treated the deputies with marked contempt, refused to open their letters, denied the constitutional construction of the States of Blois, branded them as corrupt and suborned disturbers of the public peace, and bade them a stern defiance. The answer of Marshal D'Amville, though couched in mild terms, was equally hostile and uncompromising. He declared himself as true a Catholic as any of the leaguers, stating that he had been brought up and would die in the faith of the church of Rome, but experience had taught him that Calvinism could not be extirpated by violence, and that the effusion of blood was opposed to pure religion. He denounced the States of Blois, as a prejudiced assembly, composed only of the deputies of one party.

The king, having thus failed in his pacific overtures, was compelled either to declare himself head of the league, or see that formidable power vested in the Duke of Guise. He accepted the least dangerous alternative, and from that hour was rather the chief of a faction than the sovereign of France. The most zealous of the Catholics now insisted on exterminating the Calvinists by force, and urged the king to declare war against them without delay. "I consent," said Henry; "but you must first provide money." This demand cooled the ardour of the most impetuous, and Jean Bodin, president of the order of Commons (*tiers-etat*) protested vehemently against any tax, as the nation was already reduced to the most impoverished condition. The nobility and the clergy acquiesced in these views, and the first States of Blois were dissolved without

having adjusted any of the disputes which they had been convened to settle.

The storm which had menaced the king was now for a moment averted, and he availed himself of the temporary calm to dismiss from the council those whom he suspected of attachment to the Princes of Lorraine. His next measure was to raise two armies; he gave the command of one to the Duke of Alençon, and the second he entrusted to the Duke of Mayenne, brother to the Duke of Guise, but a man of less dangerous ambition. A naval squadron was also equipped to cruise off Rochelle, to intercept supplies from England. Biron and Villeroi were deputed to hold a conference with the King of Navarre, and they were accompanied by Catharine of Navarre, who was bribed to win over her brother by a promise of marriage with the Duke of Alençon, if she succeeded. Other negociators were dispatched to Languedoc, where D'Amville, chief of the political malcontents, commanded, and he was soon persuaded to submit to the royal authority. The Prince of Condé, after sustaining several defeats, and being straitened through want of funds, accepted terms of peace, and his example was followed by the King of Navarre. This pacification was effected in September, 1577, and ratified by the edict of Poitiers.

It was stipulated that the Roman Catholic religion should be dominant, and that Calvinism should be subsidiary to it in a national and political point of view. The public profession and exercise of the reformed doctrines were granted, and with greater liberty than at any antecedent period. The

Huguenots were confirmed in all the privileges of citizenship, and declared capable of holding any civil appointment; their recent rebellion was even admitted to be not only justifiable but useful to the state; but they were ordered to pay tithes, to restore the church-property they had seized, to observe the holy days of the church externally, and abstain from all acts insulting to the Roman Catholic form of worship. Eight places of security were granted to the Calvinists, on condition that they would restore them to the king at the end of four years: these were Montpellier and Aiguemorte, in Languedoc; Myon and Serres, in Dauphiny; Seine, in Provence; Perigueux, Reolle, and Le Mas de Verdun, in Guienne.¹

Had the edict of Poitiers been faithfully executed, peace might have been established on a solid basis, but the fierce bigotry of the more intolerant Catholics looked with jealousy and hatred on every concession to the liberty of conscience and the right of private judgment. The private life of the king exposed him to the scorn and ridicule of his subjects, and gradually undermined all his moral influence. He devoted a great part of his time to conversations with Capuchin friars and Jesuits, underwent ridiculous penances, wore a horse-hair shirt next to his skin, frequented the schools of the Penitents and Hieronomites, and hung his beads openly at his girdle. His conduct within the precincts of the palace belied all these outward and ostentatious pretensions to piety. Surrounded by young favourites of the most immoral character, he indulged in vices too

¹ Davila. v. 235.

shocking to be here narrated, but which are detailed with painful accuracy in the memoirs and biographies of contemporary writers. His prodigal munificence to these unworthy parasites drained the exchequer, and enormous taxes, wrung from an impoverished people, estranged the affections of even the most loyal.

Elizabeth of England was well aware of the organization of the league, and dreaded the ascendancy of the Duke of Guise, who had strengthened himself and his party by a secret and treasonable alliance with the King of Spain. An open rupture with France did not suit her policy, but she endeavoured to neutralize the advantages which the Catholics of that country might derive from Philip, by aiding the Protestants of the Low Countries. The Duke of Alençon, eager to obtain an independent sovereignty, had directed his ambitious views to the Dutch provinces, and Elizabeth, wishing to use him as an instrument to cripple the influence of Spain, had encouraged overtures of marriage made to her by this young prince, which she never intended seriously to accept. The queen-mother, flattered by the hope of placing her son on the throne of England,¹ urged Henry III. to aid his brother with the full resources of the government, and realize the plans

¹ Catharine, before the Duke of Anjou had been offered the crown of Poland, had resolved to obtain an independent sovereignty for her youngest son. She had sent Francis de Noailles to Sultan Selim, to ask the kingdom of Algiers for that prince. Sardinia was to have been added to it, in exchange for Navarre, which the queen-mother had stipulated to transfer to Spain, and as an equivalent for the cession of his patrimonial dominions, the King of Navarre was to have been indemnified by territories in France.—*De Thou*.

devised by Admiral Coligny. The Calvinists of France, the political malcontents, and great numbers of the young nobility, emulous of military glory, promised to follow his banner as soon as it was displayed; and many of the leading men in the Low Countries, jealous of the Prince of Orange, were well disposed to receive a foreign sovereign. It was the interest of Henry the Third to have supported the Duke of Alençon; and he would have been justified in attacking an enemy who had fomented civil discord within his own realm, and armed the league against the crown; but the king was incapable of vigorous action, and threw away the golden opportunity which presented itself.

It is probable that some feeling of jealousy swayed his conduct, and that he was unwilling to aid his brother in an enterprise from which there was every probability of his reaping glory and power; but the project failed, principally through the intrigues of the abandoned courtiers, by whom the king was surrounded. The Duke of Alençon rarely frequented the royal parties, where he was not only deprived of the rank to which his birth entitled him, but treated with mockery and derision. These insults he did not dare openly to resent, from fear of incurring the displeasure of his brother, without whose aid his prospective sovereignty of the Low Countries would have been hopeless; but, stung with resentment, he resolved not to expose himself to a repetition of affront, and retired from the festivals of the Louvre. The minions persuaded the king that this absence was only the prelude to a second junction with the Calvinists and malcontents, and that a new con-

spiracy was hatching. Henry, credulous and rash, seized his brother and several of his favourites, and incarcerated them in the Bastille: on the following day he reflected on the injustice and precipitancy of his conduct, and the prisoners were released; but the contumely was not forgotten.

The duke quitted Paris and repaired to Alençon, whence he wrote to the king, stating that he had absented himself simply to mature his plans for carrying into effect his enterprise in the Low Countries, and he pledged his honour not to do any act displeasing to his majesty, and he kept his word. During his retreat the court minions quarrelled among each other; frequent duels took place, and in a few months the most insolent and overbearing were slain. Thus relieved from the presence of those most obnoxious to him, the Duke of Alençon returned to the Louvre, and the two brothers were again reconciled.

While these events were passing the queen-mother, accompanied by her daughter Margaret, Queen of Navarre, travelled through Guienne, Languedoc, and Dauphiny. These provinces were in a complete state of insubordination. The governors obeyed or disobeyed the orders of the court, as it suited their own interest or caprice, and the commandants of towns treated the provincial governors with similar disrespect. The people disdained the restraint of legal authority, and if force were menaced, the Catholic at once vowed that he would make common cause with the Calvinists, and the Calvinists threatened to join the royal party. It was one of the great objects of Catharine to put an end to these

abuses, for which purpose she repaired to Nerac, capital of the duchy of Albret, where the King of Navarre resided. She then extended the conditions of the treaty of Poitiers, by allowing the Huguenots to build chapels and raise funds for the support of their ministers. Moreover, she gave the reformers fourteen towns for their security, instead of eight, as originally stipulated. It was hoped that these concessions would have ensured tranquillity, but the expectation was disappointed.

The little court of the King of Navarre now presented a continued scene of gallantry, pleasure, and festivals; and his queen was the life and soul of this voluptuous society. She had always shown a marked preference for her brother, the Duke of Alençon, on which account she was disliked by Henry III. He dreaded her influence, and was deeply alarmed lest she might attach the Calvinist leaders to the duke's interest. Impressed with this feeling, he resolved upon her ruin, and wrote to the King of Navarre, that his wife was carrying on an intrigue with the Viscount of Turenne. Bourbon showed the letter to the parties inculpated, both of whom protested their innocence, and vowed vengeance against their accuser. The indignation of Margaret knew no bounds: she pointed out to her husband the perfidy of her brother, who had not put him into possession of CAHORS, a city promised as part of her dowry, and declared her conviction that he had invented the calumny against herself to embroil him with Turenne and the friends of that powerful baron. She concluded by exhorting him seize Cahors by force, as his just right, and the most

effective mode of avenging the dishonour cast upon her virtue. She inspired the ladies of the court with the same fury that animated her own excited passions, and they kindled the warlike spirit of all the young nobility. Banqueting and festivities ceased; all prepared for battle. This seventh war, which broke out in 1780, was called "The War of Lovers,"—a title inappropriate, for it originated in an insult offered by a brother to a sister,—in a libel pronounced by the King of France on the Queen of Navarre.

The Duke of Alençon received early intelligence of the intended hostilities from his sister, Margaret; he encouraged the enterprise, guaranteed its success, and praised it as the best means of securing a solid and permanent peace. A political convulsion suited his policy. Since his return to the court, he had vainly urged the king to afford him the supplies necessary to appear with dignity in the Low Countries; for the indolent monarch, having pacified his subjects, feared to embroil himself with Spain, and therefore refused to carry on the proposed war in Flanders. The Duke of Alençon hoped that if another civil war could be fomented, Henry would make any sacrifice for peace; and as he expected to arbitrate at pleasure between the two parties, he thought he could thus compel the king to aid him in his ambitious projects, by inducing the Calvinists to lay down their arms. With these views he urged the King of Navarre forthwith to commence hostilities, pledging himself to give the insurgents the full weight of his influence. The advice of the Duke of Alençon prevailed, and the Calvinists opened

the campaign in the summer of 1580, by an attack on Cahors.

The city of Cahors is seated on the river Lot, which, environing it on three sides, leaves only one passage free, called La Porte Aux Barres: three bridges cross the river; by one of these, called the New Bridge, the King of Navarre resolved to assault the place secretly in the night. The garrison consisted of two thousand soldiers and one hundred horse, commanded by VESINS, who had compelled the citizens to take up arms. Bourbon was only able to muster fifteen hundred men, with whom he marched from Montauban. A petard, an engine not much in use, was attached to the gate of the bridge, and when it exploded, the entrance was free; but the resistance was as determined as the attack was desperate. During five days and five nights victory was doubtful; every inch of ground was vigorously disputed; each street was a battle-field; reinforcements were hastening to support the besieged; the Calvinists wished to retreat, but the king refused. "It is Heaven," said he, "which dictates what I ought to do upon this occasion: remember, that my retreat out of this city shall be the retreat of my soul out of my body; speak, therefore, to me of nothing but fighting; conquest or death."¹ Animated by these words, his troops made fresh exertions, and the arrival of CHOUPPES, one of the lieutenants of Bourbon, with six hundred foot, and one hundred horse, decided this obstinate battle in favour of the Calvinists.

¹ Sully, tom. i. p. 80.

This success was followed by others, small indeed of themselves, but sufficient, in the heated state of the times, to alarm the Catholics and encourage the Huguenots. It became necessary for the king to act, but he had no wish to effect a complete conquest of Bourbon, whose talents and influence counterbalanced those of Guise, whom he regarded with just suspicion, as the traitorous chief of the league. On the other hand, both inclination and duty prompted him to check the armed resistance of the Calvinists, and for that purpose three armies were ordered to take the field. Marshal de Matignon commanded that of Picardy, with which he took La Fère, recently captured by the Prince of Condé; Marshal Biron marched into Guienne against the King of Navarre, but without any intention of molesting him; the Duke of Mayenne entered Dauphiny, and soon reduced the inhabitants to obedience. In the mean time, the Duke of Alençon had returned from England, where he had met a flattering reception from Elizabeth, for though that politic princess had not given him any positive pledge of marriage, he felt sure of her supporting his views on the Low Countries. He now interposed between Valois and Bourbon. The latter was put into possession of his wife's dowry, and the seventh peace was concluded.

On the 23rd of January, 1579, the republic of the United Provinces of Holland was founded, and the Prince of Orange declared its chief, with the name or title of Stadtholder. Two foreign princes competed for the sovereignty of these countries. The first was Mathias, Archduke of Austria, son of the em-

peror Maximilian II. The nobles of Brabant, jealous of the Prince of Orange, had given Mathias the government of their provinces, but his authority was of short duration. The second competitor was the Duke of Alençon, who was proclaimed Duke of Brabant and Earl of Flanders. He succeeded in levying an army in France in 1581, and his first military exploit was the relief of Cambray, which he at first succoured and then reduced under his power. Ambitious, but wanting talent, he would not content himself with the constitutional sovereignty confided to him by the States, but desired despotically to rule a people who of their own free will had offered him a crown. He banished all Protestants from his council, and reposed his confidence exclusively in Catholics. Having assembled his army, he entered Antwerp, as rudely as though he had taken it by assault, the soldiers shouting, "Kill, kill! the city is ours: the mass for ever!" But the Prince of Orange, who had suspected his treachery, was prepared for resistance, and the French were repulsed with slaughter. Five thousand of the French army and as many horses perished by cold and hunger before Mechlin. After a short residence in the United Provinces, the Duke of Alençon returned to France, detested by the Dutch, and despised by his own countrymen. He died in June, 1584, at Chateau-Thierry, a castle on his *apanage*, and his demise opened a vast field to those who were fomenting civil war, and were already prepared to carry their schemes into execution.

It has already been stated that when the States of Blois were convened in 1577, the king, instead of

openly defying and crushing the league, had declared himself its chief; and had he made use of his influence secretly to undermine this confederacy, he would probably have succeeded in the attempt. But this feeble monarch never looked beyond the present hour; he was satisfied with averting pressing evils; and when the danger was passed, he acted as though a similar crisis could never return. By this indolent indifference he permitted, even under the sanction of his own name, a faction to organize itself, which meditated his dethronement. A single trait suffices to distinguish the characters of Henry, King of France, and Henry, Duke of Guise. The former was at the head of affairs, by virtue of his rank alone; the latter had no title but personal merit, yet he really presided over the nation, and moved all the springs in the machinery of government.

The death of the Duke of Alençon served as a pretext to call the league into full and open action. The king had been married ten years, but he was childless; and though both himself and consort were still in the flower of age, the emissaries of Guise declared that there was no possibility of issue, on account of the impotency of the sovereign. There was no evidence to support this report, but it was readily credited by the Catholics; the priests vouched for its truth from the pulpit. It became therefore necessary to settle the succession to the throne. In the reigning monarch the house of Valois became extinct, and by hereditary right, Henry of Navarre, of the line of Bourbon, was next heir to the crown. But he was a Protestant. Under these circumstances the league appealed to the bigoted and intolerant passions of the people,

affirming that the accession of a Huguenot monarch would be accompanied by the total overthrow of pure religion.

The Duke of Guise, who thoroughly understood the French character, was well aware that no party could long retain influence over the masses, unless their chief was a prince of the blood. He, therefore, selected Charles, Cardinal of Bourbon, third brother of Antony, late King of Navarre, and of the deceased Prince of Condé, as successor to the throne. He promised to obtain for him a papal dispensation, and marry him to Catharine of Lorraine, widow of the Duke of Montpensier, a princess who afterwards manifested the most implacable hatred to Henry III. : the cardinal lent a ready ear to these proposals. To use the language of Davila, the cardinal was compared "to a camel, that kneels down before its enemies to take up a load, which may endanger the breaking of his own back." But if we are to credit CAYET, the cardinal merely dissimulated to deceive the Duke of Guise, for when urged by one of his faithful friends to abandon the party of the Lorraine princes, he is said to have made this answer : "I have not accepted their proposals without due reflection : think you that I do not clearly perceive that their object is to ruin the house of Bourbon ? So long as I remain with them it is at least a Bourbon who will be recognized ; nevertheless, my nephew, the King of Navarre, will make his fortune. The king and queen know my motives and my intention."

The Duke of Guise conciliated Catharine, the queen-mother, to his interests, by stating that he wished to exclude the chief of the Bourbons, that he

might vest the throne in the persons of her grandchildren, the offspring of the Duke of Lorraine and Claude of France, her daughter. The nobility were won over from hatred to the court minions, who monopolized all the royal favour, and dispensed the whole patronage of the government; they hoped to succeed to these advantages under a change of dynasty. The clergy supported Guise, because he engaged to put down by the sword all sectarianism; the credulous multitude were promised a diminution of taxes.

The league were now numerically strong; their chiefs were of noble birth and military reputation; but they wanted money. To procure this indispensable instrument of war, Guise negotiated with Spain, and it suited the policy as well as pleased the bigotry of Philip II. to grant him his alliance. So long as France was convulsed with civil war, she could not render any aid to the revolted Protestants of the Low Countries; moreover, if the chief of the Bourbons became King of France, Philip foresaw that he would endeavour to recover his hereditary kingdom of Navarre in its full integrity. These considerations would alone have determined the court of Madrid; the personal hatred which the king bore to the doctrines of Calvin was superadded. On the 2nd of January, 1585, the contract of alliance was signed at Jainville, on the confines of Picardy and Champagne, in a castle belonging to the Duke of Guise.

This treaty stipulated, that in case the King of France should die without an heir male lawfully begotten, then the Cardinal of Bourbon should be de-

clared king, as true heir to the throne, excluding from the succession all who, being heretics, or followers or favourers of heretics, had rendered themselves incapable of the inheritance; that during the life of the king, (in order to prevent the heretics making any preparation to seize the throne at his death,) the confederate princes should raise armies, make war on the Huguenots, and do all other acts expedient or necessary; that the Cardinal of Bourbon, on coming to the throne, should ratify the peace already concluded at Cambresis between France and Spain, and observe it punctually, prohibiting any other religion in the country but the Roman Catholic, exterminating all heretics by force, till the whole were utterly destroyed, and establish the decrees and constitutions of the council of Trent; that the cardinal should promise for himself, his heirs and successors, to renounce all friendship or confederacy with the Ottoman Porte, and not consent to any thing which the sultan might devise in any place against the common weal of Christians; that he should forbid all piracy, whereby the subjects of the crown of France disturbed the traffic and navigation of the Spaniards to the Indies; that he should restore to the Catholic king all that had been taken from him by the Huguenots, and specially the city and jurisdiction of Cambray; and further, that he should assist him with suitable forces to recover such towns and territories as had been taken from him in the Low Countries. On the other hand, it was stipulated that Philip should be bound to contribute fifty thousand crowns effectively every month, towards the maintenance of the league; that he

should assist them with the number of men that might be thought necessary, as well during the life of the reigning monarch, as after his death, for the extirpation of heresy; that he should receive into his protection the Cardinal of Bourbon, the Lords of Guise, the Dukes of Mercœur and Nevers, and all those other lords and gentlemen who should subscribe to the league, promising to assist them against the Huguenots and their adherents, so that they should be kept safe and harmless; that no treaty or agreement whatever should be made with the King of France, without the mutual consent of both parties, and that the articles of this union should be kept secret for many reasons; till a more fitting opportunity arrived for their publication.¹ Such was the substance of the treaty made with the King of Spain, who, in addition to the conditions enumerated, stipulated secretly with the Duke of Guise to pay him two hundred thousand crowns annually for his own use, on the understanding that he would expend them in promoting the interest of the league.

There now only remained the sanction of Rome to consolidate the confederacy, and inspire all its members with confidence; for some among them, particularly the Duke of Nevers, though favourable to its principles, shrank from open rebellion against the sacred person of the king, unless they had the written permission of the pope. The jesuit Mathieu, called the *courier of the league*, from his frequent journeys to Rome, vainly solicited the sanction of the pontiff, who reprobated the possible murder of Henry III.

¹ Davila, p. 255.

His holiness steadily refused his signature to any document, and his verbal answers were always expressed conditionally, so that he never identified himself with the league, but simply approved of the extirpation of heresy and the maintenance of the doctrines of the church. On this account the Duke of Nevers seceded from the confederacy; for he was sincere, and did not make his religion a pretext for ambition.

Although the conspirators had carried on their machinations with the most wary circumspection, the king was not ignorant that some menacing blow was about to be aimed at his crown and dignity. He convened his most intimate confidants, to advise with them what policy he ought to pursue. The Duke of Epernon, the Chancellor Chiverny, and Alberto Gondi, Marshal De Retz, recommended him to coalesce with the King of Navarre, and destroy the Guises before they could organize their forces. But the Duke of Joyeuse, who had married the king's sister, Villeroy, Secretary of State, and René de Villiquier, held a contrary opinion. They represented to the king that if he attacked the Lorraine princes, he must either do so alone, or in conjunction with the Huguenots. In the first case, he could only depend on his personal friends and adherents, as nearly the whole of France was divided between the two religious factions, the Calvinists being in possession of Poitou, Guienne, Languedoc, Gascony, and the greatest part of Dauphiny, while the league held Champagne, Burgundy, Picardy, Lyonois, Provence, and Brittany; besides which, their influence in Paris was very great. If the king

joined the Huguenots, he would certainly be abandoned by the whole Catholic population, and create a revolt in the capital; that such an act would give a colour of justice to the alliance of Spain with the league, and would probably induce the pope to abandon his present neutrality. They therefore advised him to win over the principal adherents of the Guises by negociation, hoping that by this policy the confederates would quarrel among themselves, and thus disunite, and ultimately break up the league. The queen-mother consented to this plan, which was adopted by the majority of the council. The king, however, gave his consent with reluctance, for he had struggled long to diminish the power of the Lorraine family, by gradually depriving them and their adherents of governorships and other offices, and were he now to negotiate with them, he saw clearly that they would revive their old pretensions, and claim back the posts they had formerly filled. The Duke of Epernon, the most favoured of the minions, encouraged this disposition; for he was at that time a personal friend to the King of Navarre, and feared, in case the Guises were restored to power, that he and others who had supplanted them, would be stripped of their emoluments. This latter argument was all-powerful with the court parasites, and all of them resisted any accommodation with the league, except the Duke of Joyeuse, who, being allied to the Princes of Lorraine, hoped that he might maintain his footing, though all his present associates were dismissed. Henry III. resolved to send Epernon to the King of Navarre, and the duke was instructed to exhort him to reconcile

himself to the church with the rest of his family, as the most easy and certain means of shaking the league to its foundations, and ensuring to himself the succession of the throne.

De Salignan and Roche-Laure, confidential friends of the King of Navarre, earnestly advised him to accept the overtures proposed,— to trust to the honour of the sovereign, to abjure Calvinism, return to court as first prince of the blood, and thus conquer his enemies without drawing the sword. They argued that as individuals made great sacrifices to acquire a private inheritance, he ought not to hesitate to surrender his private opinions to secure a crown; that by so doing he would ensure his own tranquillity, and establish peace throughout France; that these considerations ought of themselves to determine his conduct

On the other hand, Arnauld de Ferrier, his chancellor, Philip du Mornay, and D'Aubigny, contended that temporal hopes or certainties were not to be preferred before a clear conscience, and dwelt forcibly on the danger of his damning his soul to eternal perdition. They represented to him that the king and queen were still in the flower of their age; that they might possibly have a son: in that event he would be despised and undervalued at court, as he formerly had been, with the additional mortification of having twice recanted; that the hope of succeeding a king but two-and-thirty years old, was very remote and problematical, he himself being but little younger; that it was hard to judge which of the two, in the course of nature, would be the survivor. They pointed out the imprudence of abandoning the

party of which he was the recognized head, for a contingency so doubtful, and declared their conviction that Henry only wished to make a temporary tool of him ; that when his object was gained he would resume his old hatred, and abase, persecute, and finally destroy the whole Bourbon family.

The King of Navarre hesitated what course to pursue. By renouncing Calvinism he smoothed his path to the throne ; but he distrusted the sincerity of the court, and feared to exchange his present independence for a gorgeous imprisonment ; nay, more, should the Guises regain the ascendancy, his assassination was certain. He was also much influenced by the recent conduct of his wife, who was separated from him, and led a licentious life in Auvergne, and though her unchastity was not proved, it was strongly suspected : he felt that he must receive her back, to secure the sincere friendship of the queen-mother and the king. These considerations made him at last resolve neither to embrace Catholicism nor return to the court ; but he offered the assistance of his party to serve the king against the league and all the enemies of the crown.

With this answer Epernon returned to his majesty, who deeply lamented the failure of the negociation, and his embarrassment was soon increased by the conduct of the Spanish ambassador. The people of the Low Countries, harassed by the military rigours of Philip, and waging against him a precarious resistance, sent deputies to Henry III. inviting him to accept the sovereignty of their kingdom. He would have been justified in giving them his protection, as

Philip notoriously abetted the treasonable designs of the league, but he declined the offer made. However, the Spanish ambassador, Mendoza, complained bitterly that the embassy had even been admitted to an audience; the king indignantly resented this affront. On this, Mendoza instantly paid the Duke of Guise two hundred thousand crowns for his first year's pension, according to the treaty signed at Jainville, and exhorted him, without delay, to carry into execution the designs of the confederacy. His instructions were immediately acted upon.

The Cardinal of Bourbon was Bishop of Rouen; under pretext of keeping Lent in his diocese, he repaired to a country seat he possessed at Gaillon, within four leagues of that city. There the Dukes of Guise, Mayenne, Aumale, and Elbeuf, accompanied by great numbers of Catholic gentlemen, met him, and the league immediately published the following manifesto:—

“ In the name of God Almighty, the King of kings. Be it manifest unto all men that the kingdom of France having, for the last fourteen years, been tormented with a pestiferous sedition, raised to subvert the ancient religion of our fathers, which is the strong bond of the state, such remedies have been applied, as have nourished rather than cured the disease; for they have not established peace, except in favour of those who have constantly violated it, leaving honest men scandalized in their consciences and injured in their fortunes. Instead of a remedy for these mischiefs, which in time might have been hoped for, God has permitted that the late kings should die young, not leaving as yet any children

able to inherit the crown, and (to the grief of all good men,) has not yet been pleased to give any to the reigning king, although his faithful subjects have not ceased, and will not cease, their most earnest prayers, to beseech God, out of his mercy, to send him some : his majesty being the only son remaining of all those which his divine goodness gave to Henry II. of famous memory, it is much to be feared (which God forbid) that his house, to our great misfortune, will be extinct, without hope of issue ; and as in the nomination of a successor to the throne, great tumults will arise throughout Christendom, and perhaps the total subversion of the Roman Catholic Apostolic religion, in this most Christian kingdom, wherein no heretic would be allowed to reign, the subjects not being bound to acknowledge or submit themselves to the dominion of a prince fallen from the Christian Catholic faith ; for the first oath which our kings take when the crown is placed upon their heads, is to maintain the Roman Catholic Apostolic religion, by virtue of which oath, and not otherwise, they afterwards receive that of their subjects' loyalty.

“ Now, since the death of the Duke of Alençon, the pretensions of those who by public profession have ever shown themselves persecutors of the Catholic church, have been so favoured and upheld, that it is exceedingly necessary to make some wise and speedy provision against them, to avoid those very apparent inconveniencies, the calamities of which are already known to all, the remedies to few, and the manner of applying them almost to none. We may judge of the impending danger by the great preparations

to raise soldiers both within and without the kingdom, the withholding of towns and strong places which long since ought to have been delivered into the hands of his majesty, and the negociations with the Protestant princes of Germany to levy troops; these designs aim at no other end than the destruction of the Catholic religion. Moreover, every one knows and plainly sees the actions and deportment of some, who having insinuated themselves into the favour of the king, (whose majesty ever has been and ever shall be sacred to us,) have totally usurped the royal authority, removing from his presence all princes and nobles not immediately dependent on themselves: some have been deprived of their offices, and only allowed to retain their empty titles; governors of provinces, commanders of strong-holds, and other officers, have been forced to resign their appointments, for certain sums of money, which they reluctantly received, but dared not resist;—a new system, hitherto unknown in this kingdom, by which means the minions of the court have made themselves masters of all forces by land and by sea. Moreover, these men have drawn into their own pockets all the gold and silver from the king's coffers, and cruelly oppressed the poor people with vexatious taxes.

“ For these just causes and considerations, we, Charles of Bourbon, first prince of the blood, Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church, with the advice and assistance of many princes of the blood, cardinals, peers, governors of provinces, chief lords and gentlemen of cities and corporations, declare that we have holily promised to use strong hands,

and take up arms, to the end that the holy church of God may be restored unto its dignity, and unto the true and holy Catholic religion; that the nobility may enjoy their perfect freedom; that the people may be eased, new taxes forbidden, and all fiscal additions since the reign of Charles IX. be absolutely taken away; that all the parliaments may be left to freedom of conscience, and in entire liberty to pronounce and register their own judgments; that all subjects of the kingdom may be maintained in their governments, places, and offices, so that they may not be deprived of them, save only in the three cases of the ancient constitution, and by sentence of the ordinary judges of parliament.”¹

Such was the substance and spirit of this memorable manifesto, which artfully blended together the interests of religion, the privileges of the nobles, and the rights of the poor, but the sole end and aim of which was to put the crown on the head of Guise, and on the demise of the king, transfer the government from the Bourbon to the Lorraine family. The king answered the manifesto of the league by the following proclamation.

After a preamble, in which he admonished his subjects not to be deluded by the arts and intrigues of factious and discontented men, he entered more minutely into details. As to religion, he remarked that he had fought against, and triumphed over, the Calvinists before his accession to the throne; that since his coronation he had zealously and invariably supported the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church;

¹ Davila, p. 261, 2, 3, 4, 5.

that he had constantly endeavoured to maintain peace and prevent the effusion of blood, as true Christianity taught him to do ; that if he had not consented to levy war against the Huguenots, as the States of Bloise desired, it was because they refused to vote the money required for its prosecution ; that by the policy he had pursued, the prelates and clergy were peaceably settled in their churches and in the receipt of their tithes, the nobility lived securely in their castles, the citizen in his house, the peasant in his cottage ; and that the merchant could carry on his trade without fear of being plundered by a predatory soldiery. In reference to the administration of justice, the king observed that he had abolished supernumerary offices, and prohibited the sale of judicial appointments ; that he had put a stop to evocations, by which causes were transferred from one court to another, so vexatiously as to prevent any final decision ; that he had sent officers from the parliament of Paris into the provinces, to settle causes which were liable to be partially adjudicated through local prejudice. As to the extinction of the house of Valois in his person, he said that he was in perfect health, and in the flower of his age, and might reasonably hope to be blessed with a son. He denied that he had given offices of trust and dignity to those unworthy of them ; that such nominations formed part of his prerogative, and that he was best able to judge who were the true and faithful servants of the monarchy. He concluded with a strong exhortation to peace.¹

¹ Davila, p. 270, 271, &c.

The king's appeal to the nation produced no effect. The sword was drawn. The league advanced with success. Lyons first opened its gates to them. They failed before Marseilles and Bordeaux, but made themselves masters of Bourges, Orleans, and Angers, in the heart of the kingdom. The famous faction of the Sixteen was organized in Paris, and the metropolis became the centre of the confederacy, from which an active and extensive correspondence was carried on throughout the provinces. The king became seriously alarmed; he saw the danger by which he was menaced, but he saw that alone; the resources by which it might have been parried never occurred to him. The strength of the league was more apparent than real, and by firmness it might have been subdued; but Henry wanted the requisite energy: he adopted the weakest and most fatal policy to which any sovereign can ever have recourse,—he treated with his rebellious subjects with arms in their hands. The Duke of Guise listened to a negotiation proposed by Catharine, and stated that he desired nothing but a royal edict against the Huguenots, declaring that no other religion but the Roman Catholic should be permitted in the kingdom, incapacitating the Calvinists from holding any office or dignity whatever, and with a promise from the king that, unless the reformers at once submitted to these conditions, he would compel their observance by force of arms. To this dictatorial demand the imbecile Henry submitted, and, on the 7th of July, 1585, he signed the ignominious treaty of Nemours.

The following was its substance. That the king should prohibit every other religion in the kingdom, except the Roman Catholic; that he should banish all the heretic preachers out of his dominions; that the estates of the Huguenots should be confiscated; that war should be declared against them without delay, such war to be conducted by officers who possessed the confidence of the league; that the courts of justice established in favour of the Huguenots, by which they were to be tried by six Catholics and six Calvinists, should be abolished; that the Huguenots should not hold any public appointment whatever, unless they made a profession of faith, conformable to the Romish religion; that the Dukes of Guise, Mayenne, Aumale, Mercœur, and Elbeuf, besides their ordinary governments, should keep the cities of Chalons, Toul, Verdun, Saint Dizier, Reims, Soissons, Dijon, Beaune, Rue in Picardy, Dinan and Concarnu in Brittany; that a certain number of mounted arquebusiers should be paid by the crown, and serve as guards to the Cardinals of Bourbon and Guise, and the Dukes of Guise, Mayenne, Aumale, Mercœur, and Elbeuf; that the Duke of Guise should receive one hundred thousand crowns to build a citadel in Verdun, and that two regiments of infantry, belonging to the league, should be paid by the king; that two hundred thousand crowns should be disbursed to satisfy the claims of the German auxiliaries raised by the league, on receipt of which they would be dismissed; finally, that the league should not be called upon to refund one hundred and ten thousand ducats which they had taken

from the royal revenue, and which they had spent for the advancement of the confederacy.¹

Such were the terms of this infamous treaty. From the hour of its signature Henry III. ceased to be *de facto* King of France; he was no more than the nominal chief of a religious faction, who despised him for his imbecility. The edict of Nemours was registered in parliament, at a bed of justice held on the 18th of July, 1585.

The pretensions of the Cardinal of Bourbon to the throne, which had been put forward as the ostensible motive to the last rebellion, were not specifically settled by this treaty. The leaguers merely required that the king should recognize him, not as *first prince of the blood*, but as the *nearest*, which he really was, as brother to the late King of Navarre. Nothing was decided as to the family line of representation,—the advantage which the nephew had over the uncle, in case the throne became vacant. The Duke of Guise obtained all that he could have desired. Those who censure him for making peace, and insist that he should have pushed his advantage further, have not properly appreciated his real position. His troops were not numerous, and the favour of the people fluctuates from day to day; the fate of arms is ever uncertain; moreover, had Guise achieved a complete victory, it could only have been as the general of the Cardinal of Bourbon, whereas his sole object was the advancement of his own personal interests and those of his family: by making peace on the terms he obtained, he secured

¹ Davila, p. 276.

the government of towns for his adherents, and their garrisons depended on him alone; he drew the money for their payment: thus his position was immensely strengthened, and he had only to raise the cry of "No Calvinism," to rekindle hostilities at his pleasure.

When the King of Navarre received intelligence of this fatal treaty, his grief and consternation were excessive. Mathieu, the historian, states that such was the agitation of his mind, that one half of his moustaches suddenly turned white.¹ But he was of too lofty a character to succumb to misfortune; he grappled with his difficulties in the resolute spirit of a hero. He won over to his interest the Duke of Montmorenci, governor of Languedoc, a sincere Catholic, but whose distrust of the Guises induced him to sign an alliance offensive and defensive with Bourbon. The very extent of the danger which menaced the whole kingdom proved advantageous to him. His friends displayed increased devotedness; the indifferent joined him, partly from admiration of his fortitude, partly because they were clear-sighted enough to perceive that he was the victim of a base and unprincipled faction, who, to compass their ambitious views, would run the hazard

¹ The King of Navarre was not the only person who was panic-struck at these remarkable events. The Duke of Guise confessed that when he went to Saint-Maur, to pay his obeisance to the king, after the treaty of Nemours had been signed, he trembled when he found himself in the midst of the royal guard, and in presence of the sovereign whom he had so cruelly outraged. "I thought myself dead," said he, "and my hat seemed lifted up on the tips of my hair."—*Esprit de la Ligue*, tom. ii. p. 84.

of laying France prostrate at the feet of Spain. Small detachments of troops reached him from foreign countries, the precursors of more formidable levies ; and this prince, who was supposed by many to be preparing for flight, was soon strong enough to attack his enemies.

Before the King of Navarre commenced hostilities, he published a manifesto at Bergerac, in which he bitterly complained of being stigmatized as a relapsed heretic, a persecutor of the church, a disturber of the state, and a sworn enemy of the Catholics ;—false and malicious libels on his character, invented to deprive him of the royal succession. He denied being a relapsed heretic, affirming that he had never changed his opinions ; that he had sent an ambassador to Rome, was true, but he had no other alternative to save his life ; that when he obtained his liberty, he declared that he had never really altered his religion. He disclaimed the charge of heresy, for the truth or falsehood of the reformed doctrines were not yet decided upon by any competent authority, and avowed that he was still, and ever had been, open to conviction. He repudiated the accusation of having persecuted the Catholics, showing that many of that creed held high offices in his hereditary dominions, and that others were constantly in attendance on his person ; he averred that he had never molested the persons or touched the revenues of the Romish priests. He offered to put all his fortresses in the hands of the king, if the Guises and their adherents would imitate his example. He denounced the Lorraine princes as foreigners,—contrasted their conduct with

that of his own family,—accused them of having introduced new and onerous forms of taxation,—of having insulted the ancient nobility of France, and having polluted the administration of justice: he reminded the public of their conduct during the reigns of Henry II. and Francis II., when they sold the high offices of state, and put the purchase-money into their own pockets. He concluded with demanding permission of his majesty to give the *lie* to his enemies, which he did in terms the most unequivocal, and offered to decide the quarrel with the Duke of Guise by duel, either singly, or with two, ten, or twenty on a side, as Guise might prefer; either in France or in some foreign country.

The challenge was not accepted; but as the league were apprehensive that their champion might be suspected of cowardice, and thus lose much of his influence among a people chivalrously enamoured of personal courage, they circulated pamphlets to the effect that no Catholic bore any *personal* enmity to the King of Navarre; that they merely condemned his Calvinistic principles, from regard to the safety of religion and the tranquillity of their consciences; and that these objects were too sacredly precious to be staked on the contingency of single combat. In fact, the league wished for a general war of extermination, in which they might massacre every Huguenot in the kingdom.

Henry III. now summoned to the Louvre the two first presidents of the parliament of Paris, the mayor, the Dean of Nôtre-Dame, and the Cardinal of Guise. He thus addressed them:—"I am delighted," said the king, in a tone of irony, a sneer

playing on his lips, “ to have at length followed the prudent advice you gave me, in revoking, at your request, the last edict which I granted in favour of the Calvinists. I confess I felt some pain in cancelling it; not that I am less zealous than another for the interests of religion, but because past experience has taught me that I was about to engage in an enterprise surrounded by difficulties which I deem to be insurmountable; but since the die is cast, I hope, assisted by the wisdom of so many worthy gentlemen, that I may bring this formidable war to a happy conclusion. To undertake and finish it with honour, I require three armies. One will remain near my person; I shall send a second into Guienne, and the third to the frontier, to prevent the Germans penetrating into France; for, whatever may be averred to the contrary, it is certain they will pay us a visit. I always thought it dangerous to revoke the last edict, but since war is resolved upon, I see that difficulties thicken, and they must at once be guarded against: it will be too late to deliberate when the enemy is at our gates, and when we see from our windows our farms and mills in flames, as we have seen them on former occasions. This war, I repeat it, has been undertaken against my willing consent: but, no matter; I am resolved to spare neither labour nor expense to ensure its success; and since you would not listen to me, when I advised you not to think of breaking the peace, it is only just that you should assist me to prosecute the war. As I have undertaken it at your request, I do not intend to bear the whole burden on my own shoulders.”

Then turning to M. de Harlai, he said, "I warmly praise the zeal of yourself and colleagues, who so strongly approved of the revocation of the edict, and exhorted me so earnestly to take in hand the defence of religion ; but I also wish that you and they may know that war cannot be carried on without money ; therefore, while it lasts, you must not expect the payment of your salaries to be continued.

"As to you, Mr. Mayor, you must be persuaded that I cannot do less with the revenues of the Hôtel-de-Ville. Therefore, assemble the citizens of my good city of Paris, and declare to them, that since the revocation of the edict has given them such lively satisfaction, I trust they will not hesitate to furnish me with two hundred thousand gold crowns, which I require for the war. After an accurate calculation, I find that the expense will amount to four hundred thousand crowns a month."

He then addressed the Cardinal of Guise : "You see, my lord, the nature of my arrangements : with my own resources, added to those I shall draw from individuals, I hope to furnish the ways and means for the first month ; you will take care that the clergy provide the rest, for I will not support the weight of it alone, nor involve myself in ruin. Do not imagine that I shall wait for the consent of the pope ; for, since the war is a religious war, my conscience tells me that I ought to make use of the revenues of the church, and I shall certainly do so without the least scruple. It is specially at the urgent solicitation of the clergy that I have undertaken this enterprise ; it is a holy war, therefore the church is bound to defray the expense."

When he had concluded this caustic harangue, many rose up to remonstrate, but he would not hear them. "You had better have followed my advice," said the king, in an angry tone, "and maintained the peace, instead of holding councils of war in your shops and cloisters. I apprehend that this attempt to put down the preachers, will bring the mass into danger. However, you must now act, and leave off talking." He then abruptly retired, leaving the whole audience in consternation, for they saw clearly that the king intended to make war on their pockets, as well as on the Huguenots.

Immediately after this conference, his majesty desired the Duke of Guise to name the generals to whom the armies were to be entrusted: the latter resolved that the Duke of Mayenne should command the army of Guienne, which was to march against the King of Navarre, while he reserved to himself the troops that were to protect the frontier against the Germans. On receiving this answer, the king appointed Marshal Matignon, on whose fidelity he could depend, lieutenant of Guienne, under the Duke of Mayenne: he sent Marshal Biron into Saintonge, and the Duke of Joyeuse into Gascony, by which means he could, at pleasure, neutralize the operations of Mayenne, as the contiguity of the provinces would always enable Biron and Joyeuse to surround his army, and prevent his operations being very extended.

Before hostilities commenced, Henry dispatched another deputation to the King of Navarre, composed of theologians, lawyers, and politicians ostensibly to convert him, but really to give him more

time to prepare for his defence. Bourbon peremptorily replied that he would not return to the *prison of the court*; that arms ought not to have been taken up against him, who had always observed the king's commands, but against the perverse ambition of the heads of the league: he sneered at the cowardice of the Duke of Guise, who might have ended all disputes, by accepting his challenge; and concluded by saying, that it neither comported with his honour or conscience to be dragged to mass by force, but that he would trust in God to protect his innocence, as he had miraculously done in former times.

The ninth religious war then commenced. It was called the war of the *three Henriés*;—of Henry III. at the head of the royalists, of Henry of Guise at the head of the leaguers, and of Henry of Navarre at the head of the Calvinists.

At this critical juncture died Pope Gregory XIII., who had steadily refused to identify himself with the league, or put the Bourbon princes out of the pale of the church; he left the door open for their conversion. He was succeeded by Felici Peretti, a friar of the order of Saint Francis, who took the title of Sixtus V. This pontiff excommunicated the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé, declaring them to be relapsed heretics, and as such incapable of the royal succession; he deprived them of their estates, absolved their subjects and vassals from allegiance, and menaced with anathema all who should henceforward serve them in a military or civil capacity. The Bourbon princes braved the pope, and posted on the walls of the Vatican a protest against

his sentence. "In treating us as heretics," they said, "Sixtus has *lied*; he himself ought to be regarded as a heretic: they were ready to prove him a heretic in a general council, but till that was convened, they held him to be Anti-Christ, and in that character vowed against him mortal and irreconcilable war, reserving to themselves the right of punishing him or his successors for the insult offered to the royal majesty of France. They appealed from his sentence to the tribunal of peers, of which they were members, and invited all kings, princes, and republics in Christendom to unite with them in chastising the temerity of Sixtus.

On the other hand, the hopes of the league were raised to the most extravagant pitch by the papal espousal of their cause. The sanction of his holiness was the text of every sermon. Victory was sure to follow a banner blessed by the vicegerent of God; and the zealots already celebrated the extirpation of their enemies. But the denunciation of Rome was received in a different spirit by the more calm and reflecting members of the confederacy, for it struck at the political liberties of the kingdom, and might at some future period be twisted into a precedent to invade the privileges of the Gallican church. The lawyers of parliament and many of the prelates condemned the bull of excommunication, contending that the succession to the throne could only be decided by the states-general of the kingdom, and that so important a national question did not fall within the spiritual jurisdiction of the court of Rome. They brought to mind the summons of Pius IV., who had cited the Queen of Navarre before his tribunal, to

pronounce her confession of faith, which Charles IX. had indignantly resisted: the parliament in a body presented themselves before the king, insisting that the bull should be torn in pieces, and demanding the punishment of those who had procured it. Henry, with his habitual weakness, answered, that he would take time to reflect on the matter. The affair was dropped; but though never accepted by the parliament or officially registered, it was diligently circulated by the league among all their adherents.

The moral effect of this extreme measure on the fortunes of the King of Navarre was on the whole advantageous to his cause; for though it detached great numbers from his party, these were of the lowest and most ignorant class; it gained him the open adherence of many noblemen and gentlemen of rank and influence, and induced others, who did not choose publicly to join him, to stand neutral, or favour him in secret. The challenge he sent to the Duke of Guise,—his manly defiance of the pope,—the fortitude with which he encountered difficulty,—the severe misfortunes he had incurred,—all concurred to make him an object of interest, of admiration, of pity; they gained him the sympathy of the generous and heroic.

The Swiss cantons sent deputies to Henry III., entreating him to act leniently towards the Calvinists. The Germans, animated by the famous Theodore Beza, whose eloquence had shone so brilliantly at the colloquy of Poissy, armed in defence of their French co-religionists, and enthusiasm gave to their movements the character of a Protestant crusade.

The King of Navarre took the field : under such a leader, small bodies equalled armies. He marched from victory to victory ; his troops were fired with his spirit ; he captured fortresses, subjugated provinces, and baffled all the tactics of Mayenne. The Prince of Condé took Angers ; it was soon retaken : this prince, hurried away by impetuosity, crossed the Loire, without possessing the command of a single bridge : he was defeated and his little army disbanded. Compelled to flee in disguise, he reached Avranches in Lower Normandy, escaped to the island of Guernsey, and after many perils arrived in England.

The late edict had commanded all the Huguenots to quit the kingdom within six months after its promulgation ; two of that period were unexpired ; the leaguers prevailed on the king to shorten the term to fifteen days. Bourbon prohibited the observance of the edict, in whole or in part, throughout his hereditary dominions and the provinces he had subdued ; he also confiscated the property of the Catholics, and sold it to defray the expenses of the war. Under these circumstances the year 1586 opened.

The Duke of Mayenne, seized with fever, was obliged to quit the camp, and retire to Bordeaux. Marshal Matignon, his lieutenant in Guienne, knowing the secret wishes of Henry III., offered no active opposition to the King of Navarre ; but as soon as Mayenne recovered his health, he assaulted and captured Châtillon. Bourbon, too weak to meet him in the open field, had strongly fortified his castles ; they resisted, and Mayenne only succeeded in re-

ducing insignificant towns, while his army languished under continued sickness.

The Prince of Condé returned to Rochelle with aid received from England, sacked the castle of Dampierre, and made himself master of Soubise and Mornac, keeping the whole country in awe. He fought a severe battle near the isle of Oleron, where the loss was equal on both sides, but almost all the Calvinist chiefs were killed or wounded. There perished Rieuz and Sully, sons of the noble-minded D'Andelot, and they were quickly followed to the grave by their eldest brother, Guy de Laval, worn out with constant toil and anxiety.¹

Marshal Biron commanded the royalists in Saint-onge. He was friendly to the King of Navarre, but emulous of fame, and fearing to be eclipsed in military reputation by the Lorraine princes, he laid siege to the town of Marenne, the possession of which would have enabled him to block up Rochelle by land. Marenne, contiguous to the sea, is encompassed by marshy ground, and access to its fortifications could only be obtained through narrow roads, where the soil was tolerably firm. These the King of Navarre shut up with trenches, erecting a fort at the end of every avenue, into each of which he threw artillery and a body of musketeers. It was attacked, but the assailants were repulsed, and Biron was wounded in the hand. The marshal now proceeded more warily, and began to raise forts against those of the besieged.

In the mean time the king was raising fresh

¹ Davila, p. 294.

armies, which he resolved to entrust to his favourites, that he might turn them at pleasure against the league. He had already levied from the clergy one million two hundred thousand crowns, and he applied to Rome for a licence to appropriate to the uses of war one hundred thousand crowns per annum of ecclesiastical revenue. He hoped by these means to compel peace, but he did not succeed.

The German auxiliaries were preparing to march to the relief of the Calvinists; the king, alarmed at this movement, now bethought himself of another line of policy. He determined to coalesce with Bourbon, unite the royalists with the Huguenots and Germans, and thus at one blow crush the league. This plan required negociation; the queen-mother undertook its management. Two obstacles presented themselves—the marriage of the King of Navarre and his religion. The first was easily overcome: Catharine and her son both abandoned Margaret of Valois, dishonoured by her vices; they agreed to her divorce, intending to marry Bourbon to Christine, daughter of the Duke of Lorraine, by Claude, sister to Henry III. The religious difficulty they hoped to conquer by the temptation of the crown, and left it to the chapter of accidents. In fact, whichever way they turned, they saw no certainties; their position compelled them to speculate on probabilities.

A truce between Biron and the King of Navarre was proclaimed, and the latter proceeded to meet Catharine. The interview took place at Saint Bris, in Poitou, nearly on the confines of Saintonge. Catharine opened her proposals with the divorce of

Margaret and the marriage of Christine, promising that the marriage contract should contain a specific clause declaring Bourbon first prince of the blood and lawful successor to the throne. This union, she said, would sever the Duke of Lorraine from the Duke of Guise, and thus weaken the league; then, by joining the Germans with the royalists, the destruction of the confederacy was certain. All she required was his abjuration of heresy, in which case she engaged that the pope would revoke the sentence of excommunication.

Bourbon answered, that the king might make use of the Germans against the league, without his changing his religion; that his majesty had experienced his fidelity; that he ought not now to be distrusted; that he could not go to court with safety, while the Guises held any power; that the feelings of the Parisians were against him, and that they would be incited to assassinate him. Catharine replied that his conversion must be the basis of any arrangement; that the king could not countenance him, while he remained rebellious to the church and excommunicated; that the Duke of Lorraine would not permit the consummation of the marriage while he was under papal censure, nor would the states-general allow him to be declared successor to the throne.

Bourbon demanded two days for reflection, but he visited the queen, who had brought in her train the most voluptuous beauties of the court: by their agency she hoped to gain her point. Catharine asked him, in a marked tone of voice, and with gestures not to be mistaken, what he would have? he

replied, looking earnestly at the brilliant circle, "There is nothing here, madam, that I would have."¹ Mathieu, the historian, adds, that on Catharine pressing him to make some overture, "Madam," said he, "there is no overture here for me."

Pending this interview, Henry III., on the 1st of January, 1587, on celebrating the ceremonies of the Knights of the Holy Ghost in Paris, swore solemnly not to tolerate any other religion than the Roman Catholic. He was induced to take this step in consequence of letters he had received from Catharine, dated the 27th of December, in which she told her son that she saw no prospect of Bourbon's changing his creed. The king, therefore, to convince him that this was the indispensable condition of their union, took the oath stated; but he failed in his policy, for it put an end to the negotiation.

The conduct of Catharine at this interview has been open to much criticism. It is certain that she entertained no affection for the King of Navarre, and it is notorious that he distrusted every word she uttered. So long as Henry III. had possibility of issue, she did not desire that the Guises should crush Bourbon, for then they might easily have destroyed the last living scion of the house of Valois; but she wished to give such support to the league, as might, in case her son died childless, place the crown on the head of her grand-daughter. This, however, the Salic law, which excluded females, forbade. "She greatly wished the abolition of that

¹ Perefixe.

law," says Brantome, "in order that her daughter, or her daughter's children, might reign; and in reference to this subject she frequently quoted the opinion of Cardinal Granvelle, who denounced the Salic law as an abuse." The excessive ambition of Catharine, always manifested to secure thrones for her children, (as in the cases of the Dukes of Anjou and Alençon,) might have induced her to conquer her repugnance to the King of Navarre, on condition that he married her grand-daughter, Christine of Lorraine.

Sully taxes her with hypocrisy and deceit throughout the whole affair. He says that she urged Bourbon to change his religion, that he might forfeit the confidence of the French Protestants, lose the friendship of England, and prevent the Germans marching to his assistance. He states positively that the ladies D'Uzes and De Sauves, who knew the real motives of Catharine better than any other persons, told him she only appealed to religion as a pretext,¹ and assured him that the King of Navarre could only extricate himself from his difficulties by force of arms. "These words," says Sully, "I have always believed to be sincere, though spoken in a court where, next to gallantry, nothing was so much cultivated as falsehood."

The embarrassment of Henry was now extreme. To join the league against the Calvinists, was to

¹ It has been often asserted that the interests of true religion never influenced the politics of this queen. Witness the words that escaped her, when she thought the battle of Dreux was lost: "Well, the worst that can happen is, that we must pray to God in French!"

play the game of the Duke of Guise; to join the Calvinists against the league, was to put the throne in peril; he was too weak to attack both of them as rebels; moreover, the Germans were advancing. His counsellors were divided in opinion. Joyeuse, one of the minions, Villeroi, one of the principal ministers, and the queen-mother, urged him to coalesce openly with the league. Epernon, another minion, and all whom the insolent pretensions of the Guises had disgusted, advised him to unite with the Bourbons. At length he decided for the league, and that the Lorraines might not reap the glory of any successful battle, Villeroi prevailed on him to head his armies in person. In addition to the forces already in the field, the king raised eight thousand Swiss and fourteen thousand French infantry, and the main object of the campaign was to prevent the Germans effecting a junction with the Bourbon princes. On the 18th of September, 1587, these foreign auxiliaries reached the confines of France, and took up their first quarters at Saint-Urbin, a town belonging to the Duke of Guise, which they totally burned. They numbered sixteen thousand cavalry and twenty thousand infantry, flanked by four thousand Frenchmen. Guise only mustered three thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse.

The auxiliaries advanced, confident in their strength, despising their opponents. They crossed Champagne and Burgundy, directing their march towards the head of the Loire, intending to cross it at La Charité, as the Duke of Deux-Ponts had done, and there unite themselves with the army of the King of Navarre. Guise watched their movements; he hovered

on their rear, but was too weak to attack them. Wine and fruit proved his best allies ; these the Germans consumed immoderately, and sickness thinned their ranks. Still they moved onward ; they passed the Seine at Châtillon, but would not follow the line of march indicated by the King of Navarre, which led through a barren and mountainous country, but spread themselves over the fertile plains to pillage and fare luxuriously. But they soon had reason to repent their rashness. Henry III. had marched to oppose them with eight thousand Swiss, ten thousand French foot, and four thousand cavalry ; he blocked up all the fords and passes, garrisoned all the principal towns on the Loire, removed all the boats, and encamped on the banks of the river. This hostile attitude disconcerted the German commanders, who had been told that the king would offer them no real resistance, and that they had no one to dread but the Duke of Guise ; him they despised on account of his numerical inferiority. The German cavalry demanded their pay, and mutinied. The whole army retreated ; but a messenger was sent to the King of Navarre, demanding money, and instructions how they should proceed to effect their junction. That prince was already marching to meet his allies ; the Duke of Joyeuse resolved to intercept him. They met in Perigord, on the 20th of October, 1587, near the small village of Coutras, which has given its name to the battle.

The royalists were ten thousand strong. The Calvinist army was composed of four thousand infantry, and two thousand five hundred cavalry ;

but the disparity of numbers was balanced by discipline. Joyeuse was a courtier, Bourbon a soldier. The officers of the former were dressed in richly ornamented costume, with brilliant plumes; their servants wore gay liveries. The Huguenots displayed nought but iron and arms rusty with rain. It was the army of Darius against that of Alexander. The King of Navarre drew up his forces in the form of a crescent; the Prince of Condé and the Count of Soissons were on his right; the Viscount of Turenne on his left. "My friends," exclaimed the king, "behold a prey much more considerable than any of your former booties; it is a bridegroom who has still the nuptial present in his pocket, and all the chief courtiers with him;" then, turning to Condé and Soissons, he said, "All that I shall observe to you is, that you are of the house of Bourbon, and, please God, I will show you that I am your elder brother."¹

The battle was decided in half an hour. The victory of the Calvinists was complete; five thousand of the enemy were left dead on the field; five hundred were taken prisoners. In the King of Navarre's army very few soldiers were slain, and not one person of distinction. The Duke of Joyeuse, thrown to the ground, offered ten thousand crowns for his ransom: he was slain in cold blood; three pistol-balls passed through his prostrate body.² The Bourbon princes performed prodigies of valour on that day, but the King of Navarre shone superior to all. He wore a white plume of feathers on his hel-

¹ Le Grain, *Decade de Henri Quatre*, tom. iv.

² Davila, p. 322.

met, that he might be conspicuous. Some of his friends, throwing themselves before him to defend and cover his person, he cried, "Give me room, I beseech you; you stifle me: I would be seen." He forced the first ranks of the enemy, took several prisoners with his own hand, and collared an officer named Chateau Renard, exclaiming, "Yield thee, Philistine." He placed the body of Joyeuse in a leaden coffin, and restored it to his family; the dead minion was buried magnificently at Paris.¹

All the historians agree that the King of Navarre did not take due advantage of this victory. Even Sully condemns him. He went to Bearn, to lay at the feet of the Duchess of Guiche, of whom he was enamoured, the colours he had taken at Coutras. Sully states that the ambitious designs and self-interested views of many of the Protestant leaders, paralyzed the efforts of the King of Navarre. He accuses the Prince of Condé of then attempting to dismember from the crown of France, Anjou, Poitou, Anis, Saintonge, and Angoumois, of which he intended to form an independent sovereignty for himself: he states that the Viscount of Turenne had the same designs on Limousin and Perigord, and that the Count of Soissons, who had gained the affections of the King of Navarre's sister, and sought her in

¹ Anne, Duke of Joyeuse, had married the sister of the king's consort. When ambassador at Rome he was treated as the king's brother. He had a heart worthy of his elevated fortunes. One day, having made the two secretaries of state wait longer than was respectful in the royal anti-chamber, he made an apology, and gave them one hundred thousand crowns as a present, which he had just received from the king for his own use.
—*Notes to the Henriade.*

marriage, meditated the abandonment of his benefactor. This last accusation is true ; but De Thou differs from Sully in the other two points, and seems to think that in these censures he wrote with prejudice and passion. That historian, speaking of the consequences of the battle of Coutras, says, that a council being assembled to deliberate on what measures should be adopted, the Prince of Condé proposed to march and meet the German auxiliaries on the bank of the Loire, securing to themselves a passage over the river by capturing Saumur ; that this advice was overruled ; that it was only agreed that the Prince of Conti, brother of the Prince of Condé, should proceed with such troops as could be spared, to join the German army in the direction of the source of the Loire, taking his road through the heart of Angoumois and Limousin. The Prince of Condé, therefore, is not guilty of the charge brought against him by Sully, nor is there any evidence, but his own assertion, to inculcate the Viscount of Turenne.¹

At this juncture the Germans were in great confusion ; the Duke of Epernon constantly beat up their quarters, which convinced them that the king

¹ The King of Navarre held the Prince of Condé in the highest esteem. He was profoundly afflicted at his death ; he was heard to weep bitterly on that occasion, and exclaim, " I have lost my right hand."—*Perefixe*. Condé died at Saint Jean D'Angely, on the 5th of March, 1588, aged thirty-five years. He was poisoned by a servant named Brilliant. His second wife, Charlotte Catharine de la Tremouille, was suspected of being an accomplice in the murder. After six years' imprisonment, she was acquitted of the crime charged against her, by the parliament of Paris: Brilliant was torn to pieces by four horses.—*Sully*.

was their decided enemy. The Protestant Swiss infantry, incorporated with the Germans, became unruly, for they saw the banners of their native cantons in the royal army, though indeed they were carried by Swiss Catholics; still they were reluctant to fight against their own countrymen. The death of their commander, who sunk under a malignant fever, increased their insubordination. This mutinous spirit was known to the Duke of Guise, and he resolved to take advantage of it.

The Germans were within twenty-eight leagues of Paris, and quartered in three divisions. Their leader, Baron Honan, with the main strength of the cavalry, was at Vilmory; the Swiss were stationed under the walls of Montargis, two leagues distant from Vilmory; the remainder were scattered round those two villages, some a league, some two leagues, from head-quarters. Guise had received correct intelligence of this arrangement, and determined to attack them; his brother, Mayenne, ridiculed the attempt. Guise insisted; Mayenne remonstrated, and advised him to take time for reflection; but Guise sharply answered that, if he could not make up his mind in a quarter of an hour, he would never do so during the whole of his life. He reached the enemy's encampment in the night, entered Vilmory when the Germans were asleep, set it on fire, made a fearful slaughter, collected a great booty, and retreated before break of day.

This unexpected attack increased the dismay of the foreign auxiliaries, and the mutinous spirit became more violent than ever. At this juncture the Prince of Conti joined them, without money, but he

brought news of the victory at Coutras. This rallied the drooping spirits of the Germans, who now felt confident that the King of Navarre would easily unite his forces to their own; but they were disappointed. The Duke of Guise vigilantly watched every opportunity to follow up his first success. The Germans occupied the small town of Auneau; but as the castle held out for the king, they had blocked up all the streets that led to it with carts chained together, barrels, and logs of wood. Baron Honan, their commander, though a dauntless soldier, was a bad general; his discipline was lax; his soldiers were constantly intoxicated. Guise again attacked them when buried in wine and sleep; he set fire to their barricades; the slaughter was immense: Honan vainly attempted to rally the Swiss and French; the victory of the Catholics was complete.

Henry III., jealous of the laurels gained by Guise, now determined to pursue the foreigners hotly; the Duke of Epernon assailed them, but without success; all the glory of the campaign rested with the chief of the league. Epernon then, by the king's desire, offered the Swiss a free conduct to return home; this they accepted. The Germans, disheartened by their abandonment, retreated towards their own country: they were constantly harassed on the march. Out of all who had entered France, only seven thousand regained their native land. As an instance of the cruelties inflicted on them, Davila relates that a woman in Burgundy cut the throats of eighteen, who had been left sick in her cottage, to revenge the losses she had sustained.¹

¹ Davila, p. 328.

The defeat of the Germans depressed the spirits of the Huguenots and raised the hopes of the league to the highest pitch. The King of Navarre returned to Rochelle; Henry III. entered Paris as in triumph, arrayed in a coat-of-mail, his helmet on his head. The people laughed at him, but not daring to insult him personally, all the taunting wit and raillery of the Parisians were directed against the Duke of Epernon: a book was cried through the streets, entitled "Military Exploits of the Duke of Epernon;" on each page, in large type, was printed the monosyllable, "Nothing." On the other hand, every corner of the metropolis, resounded with the praise of the Duke of Guise; he was called the new David, a second Moses, the modern Gideon, the deliverer of the Catholic people, the prop and pillar of holy church. He felt conscious of his popularity, and now determined to turn it to advantage, for the king having given to Epernon the office of Admiral of France and the Governorship of Normandy, both vacant by the death of Joyeuse, Guise saw that his family had no prospect of obtaining any share of the royal favour.

He summoned his brothers and relatives to meet him at Nancy. Hurried away by ambition, they resolved to extirpate the Calvinists, to depose the king, immure him in a cloister, expel the minions, confer on themselves all the high offices and dignities of the state, and rule the whole government of France at their pleasure.¹ They forwarded their de-

¹ The Cardinal of Guise used frequently to say, that he should never die happy till he held the king's head between his knees, to fit on a monk's cowl. Madame de Montpensier, sister to the Guises, wished to use her own scissors to make the cowl.

mands in writing to the king; the document was signed by themselves, the Cardinal Bourbon, and other principal chiefs of the league. They insisted that his majesty should cordially and unequivocally unite himself to them, for the purpose of rooting out the Huguenots,—banish from his court and council all persons to be named by the Catholic princes,—publish and enforce the decrees of the council of Trent, though without prejudice to the privileges of the Gallican church,—place in the hands of the confederates such towns and fortresses as they might think fit, the crown paying the garrisons and all the costs of fortifications,—and finally confiscate all the estates of the Huguenots, and apply the proceeds of their sale to defray the expenses of the war. Demands so daringly insolent abundantly show the depth of moral degradation in which the king was sunk.

Henry III. was now more than ever perplexed. He began to be most seriously alarmed at the projects of the league, yet still he weakly fancied that when the moment of action arrived, their courage would fail. The queen-mother purposely concealed from the king the extent to which the confederacy were prepared to carry their criminal excesses. Such was her love of power, that she exulted at his embarrassment, hoping that he would be compelled to follow her own views; thus she strove to recover her ancient influence, which had been weakened by the ascendancy of the favourites.

The device of Henry III. was three crowns, with the motto, *Manet ultima cælo*; the leaguers travestied it into *Manet ultima claustro*.—*Notes to the Henriade*.

Discord reigned in the privy council. Villeroi and the other ministers detested Epernon, whose voice was dominant in the cabinet. His insolence had become insupportable. He had given Villeroi the lie in presence of the king, and called him knave and scoundrel. He accused Pierre d'Espinac, Archbishop of Lyons, to his face, with carrying on incestuous intercourse with his own sister. There could be no unity of political action among men thus severed by mutual jealousy, hatred, and distrust. On the other hand, the league acted steadily and in concert.

Paris, in the reign of Henry III., was not protected by the vigilant police of modern days. Now this constabulary force receives its instructions from the minister of the crown; then it was wholly under the control of the municipal authorities. In the times of which we write, Paris was encompassed with walls, flanked by lofty towers; the gates closed exactly, and the sheriffs kept the keys. The burgesses were formed into a militia, chose their own officers, and were frequently drilled. At the corners of the streets large chains were attached to rivets in the houses; these were stretched out on the least alarm, and thus all communication from one quarter of the capital to another was impeded. The people had banners, fixed places of meeting, rallying words, and no more was required than the beat of a drum to collect a mass of soldiers under arms, imperfectly disciplined it is true, but formidable from their number.

The city was divided into sixteen districts. As in those days of excitement each individual fancied him-

self charged with affairs of state, there was established in each of these districts a sort of council, in which the interests of the holy union were debated. The chief leader of the sectional assemblies reported to the general council of the league the result of their deliberations, their views, their schemes, the feeling of the public, the state of their disposable force, and received the orders necessary to be executed for the advancement of the common cause. It may be readily supposed that the sectional presidents were not the least ardent of the council. The proposals made by these sixteen demagogues were frequently so intemperate, so rash, and so impracticable, that they were rejected. As is usual with men of impetuous characters, eager to rule, they highly resented any censure of their opinions; they murmured, and their partisans shared their discontent: too obstinate to yield, they determined to act for themselves. Thus was formed the celebrated COUNCIL OF SIXTEEN, so famous in the history of the religious wars of France.¹

The king, under the influence of that weak vacillation which marked his character, on receiving the insolent petition drawn up at Nancy, said he would take time to consider its purport, instead of seizing all who had signed it, and arraigning them for high-treason. Guise, emboldened at the timidity of the king, now resolved to strike a decisive blow at the crown. He was in constant correspondence with the SIXTEEN. These audacious rebels proposed to seize the person of Henry during the celebration of the CAR-NIVAL: they could depend on twenty thousand armed

¹ *Esprit de la Ligue*, tom. ii. p. 144.

men. Their plan was, to attack the Louvre, disarm the guards, and murder the ministry and courtiers. Guise sent them five commanders; the Duke of Aumale held five hundred cavalry in readiness; the sheriffs, or wardens of the barriers, gave the keys of the gates of Saint Denis and Saint Martin to the Duke of Aumale, that he might enter the city during the night.

Nicholas Poulain, one of the conspirators, saved the king. He revealed every thing to the chancellor, named his accomplices, and offered to remain in prison till he had fully justified the whole of his statements. Doubts were entertained of his veracity, and they who secretly favoured Guise declared him a suborned calumniator, unworthy of credit. Fortunately for the king, he acted on the advice of Poulain. In full day arms and ammunition were brought into the Louvre; the Swiss were encamped at Lagny, on the Marne, close to the capital; the archers, who were divided into four bodies, each of which only did duty at the palace once in three months, were all summoned. These precautionary measures filled the SIXTEEN with alarm; they knew they were betrayed, and trembled for their lives. They sent to Guise, urging him to come forthwith to Paris and direct their movements. This also the king ascertained, and he forbade the Duke to approach the capital under pain of his high displeasure. BELLIEVRE carried the message, but he did not dare to deliver it in the peremptory terms in which it was conceived, from dread of being murdered on the spot. Guise remonstrated, and Bellièvre promised to return, when he had again communicated with the king. His ma-

jesty then sent a positive order in writing : it was forwarded by post, for ANQUETIL declares, that there were not twenty-five crowns in the exchequer with which to pay a private courier. Guise, pretending that the letter never reached him, advanced to the capital.

He entered Paris on the 9th of May, 1588, at noon, with only seven companions ; but he had not passed half through the city before he was surrounded by thirty thousand persons. Davila relates all the circumstances with minute accuracy, from the facts furnished by his brother, an eye-witness of the scene. " The shouts of the people," he says, " sounded to the skies ; nor did they ever cry VIVE LE ROI, as energetically as they now shouted VIVE GUISE. Some saluted him, some gave him thanks, some bowed to him, some kissed the hem of his garment ; those who could not get near his person, manifested their joy by gestures and the action of their hands ; some were seen who, adoring him as a saint, touched him with their beads, and then either kissed them or pressed them against their eyes and foreheads : even the women, throwing green leaves and flowers from their windows, honoured and blessed his coming. He, with a smiling countenance and gracious air, showed himself affable to some in words, to some by courteously returning their salutations ; others he requited with kind looks. Passing through this throng of people with his hat off, he omitted nothing that was calculated to win the affections and applause of the people."¹

Flushed with success, Guise repaired at once to

¹ Davila, p. 337.

the palace of the queen-mother: she, astonished at his unexpected appearance, received him pale, trembling, and dismayed. Her gentleman-usher was dispatched to the Louvre to announce his arrival to the king. The consternation of Henry and his advisers was extreme. The abbot DEL BENE advised Henry to receive the duke in the royal closet, and there slay him, quoting from Scripture, *Percutiam pastorem et dispergentur oves*, "I will strike the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered;" but he was overruled; the attempt was deemed too hazardous, for the whole population of Paris would have risen as one man to avenge the murder.

While the king was balancing in his mind what conduct he ought to pursue, the queen-mother arrived, accompanied by Guise. The populace had followed them, and now crowded into the court of the Louvre and the adjoining streets. They entered the royal chamber. The duke bowed with reverence to his majesty, who, in an angry tone, said, "I sent you word not to come." Guise mildly answered, "I am come to throw myself on the justice of your majesty, that I may clear myself of the calumnies cast on me by my enemies; nevertheless I would not have come, had I been distinctly told to stay away." The king then turned to Bellièvre, asking him if he had not delivered his message. Bellièvre commenced an explanation. Henry stopped him short, and addressing Guise, said, "That he knew well that he was not calumniated by any one; but that his innocence would have been more apparent had not his mere presence caused tumult in the capital and disturbed the quiet of the government." He was then silent,

but his countenance was eloquent, and betrayed what was passing in his mind. Catharine read his thoughts, and whispered him to be prudent, as the mob were in the highest state of enthusiasm and exasperation. Guise noted the gestures of the mother and the son, and fearing lest his life might be attempted, he feigned to be weary with his journey, took his leave, and repaired to his own house, amidst the acclamations of the people.

On the night of that day he fortified his house, and stored it with ammunition. Equal vigilance was observed at the Louvre. On the following morning Guise again went to the palace, accompanied by four hundred gentlemen, who carried loaded pistols under their cloaks. This was to display his strength. In the evening he visited Catharine; the king arrived. They went out to walk in the gardens of the Hôtel Soissons, the residence of the queen-mother. Guise heard the cheers of the multitude outside the walls; these emboldened him: he declared to the king, in language respectful but firm, that he would insist on his majesty's waging war to the knife against the Calvinists, and on the dismissal of Epernon, his brother La Valette, and all persons suspected by the league. The feeble monarch, instead of seizing this insolent subject, who bearded him in the very heart of his capital, pleaded the cause of his favourites by abject apologies,

Paris, at this time, was full of strangers, who had flocked up from the provinces to take part in the intended rebellion. The king issued an order that they should return to their own homes—it was resisted. Guise availed himself of this opportunity to circulate

a report that government intended to put to death one hundred and twenty of the principal Catholics. A counterfeit list was framed: the name of Guise appeared at the head. The people, incited by the priests, became furious. Popular indignation was increased by the arrival of the Swiss soldiers from Lagny. Then commenced the famous BARRICADES. At the sound of the tocsin the streets were unpaved, the chains extended from corner to corner: the Swiss, shut up in the square before the church of the INNOCENTS, were unable to make any defence; thirty-six were slain, the remainder surrendered. Guise saw himself master of the capital, but wishing to demonstrate his moral power, he rode through all the quarters of the city, unarmed, with merely a truncheon in his hand, and commanded the release of all prisoners: he was obeyed; men called him the King of Paris.

While Guise was acting Henry was deliberating. He resolved to send Catharine to negotiate with his enemy. She was not allowed to ride in her carriage, but compelled to go in a sedan. The duke received her with his wonted courtesy, and produced his conditions with his wonted insolence. An absolute conqueror could not have put forth demands more exorbitant. He insisted that the king should declare him lieutenant-general in all places and provinces within his dominions, with the same authority his father held in the reign of Francis II.; that the states-general should be convened at Paris, in which assembly that authority should be confirmed; that the King of Navarre and all the Bourbon princes who adhered to him, should be

declared to have forfeited their inheritance to the crown; that taxation should be limited; that the form of government should be defined by certain rules, which the king should not be permitted to change or modify; that the absolute and uncontrolled charge of the war against the heretics should be confided to him alone, and be prosecuted with two armies, one in Poitou, one in Dauphiny; that the royal body-guard of forty-five gentlemen should be dismissed; that the command of the regiment of guards should be taken from the Duke De Crillon, and conferred on an officer possessing the confidence of the Catholic princes; that all the fortresses of Picardy should be delivered up to the Duke of Aumale, as governor of that province; the government of Lyons was claimed for the Duke of Nemours, and that of Normandy for the Duke of Elbeuf; six towns were to be placed in the hands of the league, in which they might keep garrisons and appoint governors; security was demanded to be given to the Parisians for payment of the rents due to the Hôtel-de-Ville; the government of Paris was claimed for the Count of Brissac, as well as the office of colonel-general of the infantry, held by the Duke of Epernon. The last stipulation was that the Duke of Mayenne should be appointed Admiral of France, and De la Chastre, Marshal of France, in the place of the Duke of Biron.¹

When Catharine went to the interview she was prepared to listen to unreasonable demands, but this haughty dictation roused her choler. "What," said she, "would the people of France say, what

¹ Davila, p. 345.

would the sovereigns of Europe think, if the king permitted a subject even to forward propositions which, if accepted, would despoil him of his crown?" Guise answered briefly that he would not abate one iota of his pretensions, and that he was resolved to lose his life, or secure religion and the rights of his family.

With this answer Catharine returned to her son: it was resolved that Henry should save himself by flight. To effect this object the queen-mother visited Guise on the following morning, and kept him in protracted conversation, that he might have no opportunity of personally investing the Louvre. MENEVILLE, one of the duke's attendants, entered the apartment, and whispered in his ear, "The king has fled from Paris." He started up dismayed, and reproachfully said to Catharine, "Ah, madam! I am undone; while your majesty has been detaining me, the king has departed to plot my ruin." She, versed in all the arts of dissimulation, replied, that she did not credit the intelligence, and then took her leave. Henry rode to Chartres, where he was received with every mark of affection and respect.

It clearly was the intention of Guise to have arrested the king, and his warmest admirers admitted that he had failed in his wonted prudence and wariness. He had gone too far to retreat, and he ought boldly to have ventured the last extremity on the day of barricades. The celebrated Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma, condemned his undecided policy, saying, that whoever draws his sword against his prince, should throw away the scabbard. How-

ever, though the grand prize had escaped him, Guise took every precaution to secure the advantages he had gained. Master of the capital, he established a new municipal administration, and named its officers. He went to the first president of the parliament, begging him to convene that assembly; but Harlai answered, "It is to be lamented, when the servant drives away the master: my soul I confide to God, my heart belongs to the king, my body I offer to the wicked." Guise insisted that the parliament should pass certain measures which he indicated. "When the majesty of the prince is violated," retorted Harlai, "the magistrate no longer wields any lawful authority." His colleague, Brisson, did not show the same firmness; whether through weakness or secret attachment to the league, he complied with the wishes of the duke. Guise secured the Bastille, and took Saint Cloud, Vincennes, Lagny, Charenton, and other towns, by which he commanded the free navigation of the Seine and Marne up to Paris.

While these events were passing in the capital Epernon was in Normandy, whither he had gone to secure the important towns of Havre and Rouen. When he heard of the rebellion he hastened to rejoin the king, who received him coldly. Henry had already selected this faithful officer as the first victim demanded by Guise. Epernon at once resigned the government of Normandy, which the king bestowed on Francis of Bourbon, Duke of Montpensier: by this trimming policy he hoped to gain two points—the approbation of the league, for having dismissed the favourite, and the exclusion of

any member of the house of Lorraine from the command of Normandy. He only, in fact, disgusted a friend without conciliating an enemy,—the inevitable result of all half-measures. Epernon, accompanied by his friend, the Abbot Del Bene, travelled rapidly to Angoulême: he secured its castle. From that position he could communicate with the towns of Languedoc, held by Marshal D'Anville, correspond with the Huguenot leaders, and, if pressed, retire easily into Provence. This movement disconcerted the king. Villeroy, by his orders, wrote to Tagens, who commanded in Angoulême, neither to obey or receive Epernon: it was too late.

Negotiations for peace were now opened between the king and the league: it was concluded on conditions nearly similar to the demands of the Guises, drawn up at Nancy. It was stipulated that the king should declare himself head of the Catholic league, swearing to take up arms, and never lay them down till Calvinism was exterminated; that a public edict should oblige all princes, peers of France, lords and officers of the crown, all towns, colleges, and corporations, even the whole people, to take an oath to the same effect, and bind themselves never to suffer any one to reign who did not profess the Catholic religion; that an amnesty for the past should be granted to the leaguers for all acts they might have done; that for the future none should hold any office, place, or dignity in the realm, who did not subscribe to the profession of faith established by the Sorbonne; that the Duke of Guise should have a patent to command all the forces in the kingdom, and that the states-general should be as-

sembled at Blois, in the month of October next ensuing, (1588,) to cause the edict of the Catholic union to be sworn to, to accept the decrees of the council of Trent, and confirm the authority granted to the Duke of Guise. Such were the principal points of the edict of July; the remainder merely related to governorships of towns and provinces.¹

The Princes of Lorraine had now only one difficulty to surmount,—the command of a majority in the states-general, about to be convened at Blois. Could they succeed in that object the head of their family would hold his power by the will of the nation, and the king could never deprive him of it without impugning the national vote. Guise already swayed all the mighty influence of the court: he now struggled to secure the representatives of the people; thus doubly armed, he could easily bid defiance to the crown. To some he gave money; others were promised military commands; some were allured by the prospect of civil appointments: religious zeal, ambition, avarice, all were appealed to. Guise was master of the assembly before it met.

In the interval, Villeroy, eager to wreak his vengeance on Epernon, had sent orders for his arrest at Angoulême. The king had indeed sanctioned this measure, but he had commanded that the duke's life was not to be endangered in the attempt. Villeroy, however, dispatched the order unconditionally. It was obeyed. Epernon defended himself with dauntless courage; many of his servants were slain; his wife was arrested in church, while attending mass: ultimately the duke triumphed.

¹ Davila, p. 354.

When this news reached the king he was highly incensed, accusing Villeroi of having betrayed him, to gratify his personal hatred of his former rival. The minister was dismissed: the other members of the cabinet shared his disgrace. Monthelon succeeded Chiverni as chancellor. The new secretaries of state were men of reputation and approved royalists. Under these circumstances the second STATES of BLOIS opened on the 16th of October, 1588.

The scene was grand and imposing: every exertion had been made to give solemnity to the meeting. Henry comported himself with that majestic dignity which he was wont to assume when in presence of the representatives of the nation. He spoke with singular eloquence; and Davila, who was present, eulogizes the modulation of his voice, his impressive action, and graceful delivery. He commenced by declaring his earnest desire for the good and welfare of his people, pointed out the embarrassing condition into which intestine discord had reduced the crown, exhorted all to lay aside personal prejudices, to forget their enmities, and avoid the bitterness of faction; he called upon them to provide remedies for the public exigencies, to unite sincerely under his sceptre, to abandon all innovations, and denounce all leagues and confederacies, both within and without the kingdom, which had disturbed their lawful and natural sovereign, impeded the course of government, interrupted the administration of justice, and afflicted all his loyal subjects. He promised to forget the past, but declared that he would treat any future cabal against his authority as high-treason. He pledged himself

to put down heresy, to maintain the privileges of the nobility, and reduce the burdens of the people. He earnestly besought every member of the states to aid him in carrying these his sincere wishes into effect. He concluded by sternly saying, that whoever sacrificed the national weal to personal ambition, and sought to promote his private fortunes by treachery and duplicity, would have to answer for his perfidiousness at the judgment-seat of God, and brand his name with eternal infamy.

This speech stung the Duke of Guise to the quick: the allusions were too pointed to be mistaken. The king went a step further. He determined to print his speech. The Archbishop of Lyons vainly remonstrated against its publication. It produced a powerful effect among those who merely wished the maintenance of the Roman Catholic religion, but disclaimed all political interference with the prerogative. The Lorraine princes, feeling it might weaken their influence, determined to risk every thing on the hazard of a die. Their language increased in boldness: there was no longer any reserve. The Duke of Guise, having demanded that Orleans should be given up to the league, and being refused, had the audacity to say, "that he would hold it in spite of the king's teeth." His sister, the Duchess of Montpensier, always carried a pair of gold scissors at her side, boasting that she intended to use them to make a monacal crown for Henry, when he was incarcerated in a monastery. This was the treatment received by Chilperic from Charles Martel and his son Pepin, the latter of whom assumed the title of King of France. Guise was

more than suspected of intending to follow the example of these ancient mayors of the palace. Henry was not ignorant of this design.

At the second meeting of the states Guise proposed to register the decrees of the council of Trent, by which he would have assured the exclusion of the house of Bourbon. In this he failed. The clergy feared to place in jeopardy the rights and immunities of the Gallican church ; the nobility dreaded any extension of papal power over their temporalities ; the deputies of the third estate were divided in opinion. The resolution, moved by the duke, was postponed to further consideration.

He was not discouraged by this defeat : keeping his main object in view, he proposed that the King of Navarre and all his family, as guilty, or suspected of heresy, should be formally declared incapable of ever succeeding to the throne. All the clergy adopted this motion, except the Archbishop of Bourges, who deemed it unbecoming to pass the vote, considering that Henry III. was still in the prime of life, and that, in the course of nature, there was every possibility of his having issue ; but this opposition was set aside, and the STATES demanded that the vote should receive the royal sanction, and be passed into a fundamental law. Henry evaded compliance, by sending the deputies a protest forwarded to him by the King of Navarre, in which he denounced the assembly of Blois as a packed and exclusive meeting, composed entirely of his enemies : he denied its right to assume the title or exercise the functions of the states-general, as none of its members were Calvinists : he rebutted the charge of

heresy, as he had always been ready, and still was ready to submit his opinions to the scrutiny of a national or general council. Finally, he protested against being condemned without being allowed to defend himself. The *states* answered that the pope had excommunicated the King of Navarre, and declared him a relapsed heretic: against that sentence there was no appeal.

Henry thus pressed, and finding that he could neither conquer the inflexible obstinacy of the league, nor evade their demands, agreed to the general vote, and said that he would give instructions to frame a decree for carrying it into effect; but, in the mean time, he persuaded the pope to give absolution to the Prince of Conti and the Count of Soissons, sons of the Prince of Condé, who was slain at Jarnac. Thus he outwitted Guise, for this act restored these two Bourbon princes to the right of succession to the throne.

An event now occurred which diverted the attention of the states from civil war to the foreign policy of the kingdom. Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, whose family had pretensions to the Marquisate of Saluzzo, then incorporated with France, availed himself of the insurrection at Paris, to seize Carmagnola, and other strong-holds in that state. He pretended, however, to keep them in trust, not in possession, expressing his fears that the Huguenots of Dauphiny were about to seize on the marquisate, and introduce heresy: he engaged to restore every thing, when that danger was removed.¹ This proceeding

¹ That the Duke of Savoy intended to make a permanent conquest of the marquisate appears certain, from the statement

touched the national pride of the French nobles, and the voice of patriotism was heard amidst the din of religious discord. The king industriously circulated a rumour that the Duke of Savoy, who had married a daughter of Philip II. had been instigated by Guise: Guise charged the act to the connivance of the king. There were murmurs on all sides. Henry proposed to make war on Savoy, which Guise dared not resist, though Emanuel was his secret ally, for opposition on his part would have shown a disposition to submit to a national affront. He, therefore, urged this measure, still insisting on raising other armies with which to attack the Calvinists. But the factious spirit of the states voted an immediate and considerable reduction of taxes. They willed the end, but refused to provide the means. Henry now determined to cut a knot which he could not untie.

He summoned Marshal D'Aumont, a brave soldier, and Nicolas D'Angenay, an able lawyer, to a private council, and told them that he intended to put the Duke of Guise to death. The former approved this resolution; the latter advised that he should be imprisoned, and tried before the regular tribunals for treason. The king then sent for Colonel Alfonso Corso, his confidential friend, and Louis, Lord of Rambouillet, brother to D'Angenay. They resolved that Guise should be forthwith slain: the difficulty was to carry the design into execution. of Davila. He says that the duke caused a medal to be stamped, on which a centaur was seen trampling a crown under foot, with the motto "Opportune," which implied that he would avail himself of the intestine troubles of France to recover what had belonged to his ancestors. (p. 265.)

Henry selected Grillon, captain of the guard, as the instrument of his vengeance: he was a fierce, bold man, and a personal enemy to the Duke of Guise; but his sense of honour was keen. He thus answered the king: "Sire, I am your majesty's most faithful and devoted servant, but I make profession to be a soldier and chevalier: if you command me to challenge the Duke of Guise, and fight him hand to hand, I am ready at this instant to lay down my life for your service; but that I should serve as his executioner, when his majesty's justice condemns him to die, is an act which suits not one of my condition, nor will I ever do it." The king, though disconcerted, was not surprised, for he knew Grillon to be fearless, and a plain, honest man; all he now required was his silence. "I am a servant of honour and fidelity," replied the captain of the guard, "and one who would never disclose the secret interests of his master;" then bowing, he took his leave. Henry next applied to Lognac, formerly a partisan of Joyeuse, slain at Coutras, by whom he had been introduced to the court: he promised to do the deed effectually.

On the evening of the 22nd of December, 1588, the guards of the palace were doubled. Henry ordered his nephew, the Grand Prior of France, to make a match at tennis, for the next day, with the Prince of Jainville, eldest son of the Duke of Guise, that he might be unprepared to give any assistance to his father. On the following morning Guise presented himself at the palace, when Larchant, one of the officers of the guard, presented him a petition, praying that his men might receive their arrears of

pay ; and on pretence of receiving an answer fixing the day, he accompanied the duke to the hall-door, which was closed as soon as they had passed through, the soldiers making a long lane to the bottom of the stairs. At the same moment the gates of the castle were closed. Pelicart, secretary to the Duke of Guise, suspecting foul play, sent him a note by one of his pages, couched in these words, " My lord, save yourself, or you are dead ;" but it never reached him. While in one of the ante-rooms the duke almost fainted, and some restoratives were administered to him. The secretary, Revol, then told him to proceed to the royal closet : he entered the saloon of reception, usually crowded with courtiers, but he saw only eight persons. As he raised up his hand to lift the hangings which screened the king's private apartment, Saint Malin struck him in the throat with a dagger : he was immediately assailed by the others ; he endeavoured to draw his sword, but it never quitted its scabbard. Lognac gave him the last blow, when he fell, and died without uttering a word.¹

¹ Davila, page 370. The following account of this assassination is taken from the notes to the *Henriade*. The Duke of Guise was slain on Friday, the 23rd of December, 1588, at eight o'clock in the morning. The historians say, that he was seized with a faintness in the royal ante-chamber, having passed the night with a lady of the court, the Marchioness of Noirmoutier. All who have written about this death say that this prince, as soon as he entered the council-chamber, began to suspect his fate by the movements he observed. D'Aubigné relates that he met Espinac, Archbishop of Lyons, his confidential friend, who said to him, in presence of Larchant, one of the captains of the guard, alluding to a new coat the duke wore, ' That dress is too light for this season, you should have put

Henry was not satisfied with slaying the chief of the league; he arrested the Cardinal of Guise, the Archbishop of Lyons, the old Cardinal of Bourbon, the Prince of Jainville, the Dukes of Elbeuf and Nemours, and the Duchess of Nemours, mother of the Guises. Many others of inferior rank were also seized, among whom was Pelicart: all his papers were taken from him; the foreign correspondence of Guise was brought to light, and it proved that he had received two millions of ducats from Spain.

When the deed was known, Henry ordered the gates to be opened: his chamber was soon crowded; he threw aside his timidity, and displayed the energy he had shown at Jarnac and Moncontour. "Henceforward," he said, "I wish my subjects to know that I will be obeyed: I will punish the leaders of insurrections, and those who aid them: I will be king not merely in words, but in deeds; and it will be no difficult matter for me to wield the sword as I did in my youth." He then abruptly quitted the apartment with fierce gestures, and hurried to Catharine, who was sick in bed: "Madam,"

on one stiff with fur." The words, pronounced in accents of fear, confirmed the suspicion of Guise. However, he entered the royal ante-chamber, which led to the closet, the door of which had been walled up. The duke, ignorant of this, was about to lift up the tapestry which covered it, when several GASCONS, called the FORTY-FIVE, struck him with daggers, which they had received from the king himself. The assassins were La Bastide, Monsivry, Saint-Malin, Saint-Gaudin, Saint-Capautal, Halfrenas, Herbelade, and Lognac, their captain. Monsivry gave him the first blow: he was followed by Lognac, Bastide, &c. They show in the castle of Blois a stone in the wall against which he attempted to support himself, when falling, as the first marked with his blood.

said he, "the King of Paris is no more; I am now King of France." "I fear," replied his mother, "that you will soon be king of nothing."

Henry dreaded nothing but the censure of the pope. He sent the secretary, Revol, to the Venetian ambassador, to justify his conduct, knowing that the republic had great influence with his holiness. He himself hastened to Morosini, the cardinal legate, and succeeded in averting his displeasure. Thus encouraged, he ordered the execution of the Cardinal of Guise, who submitted to his fate with heroic courage.¹ Alfonso Corso was directed to seize the Duke of Mayenne at Lyons, but he escaped to Dijon. The Duke of Nemours bribed his keepers and fled. The Duchess of Nemours was released on account of her age.

Henry of Lorraine, Duke of Guise, was one of the most remarkable men of his time. To the glory of an illustrious birth, he, by his own personal qualities, added lustre to his distinguished family. He possessed a vigorous intellect, a far-seeing judgment, a head to contrive and a hand to execute: he was affable, liberal, persevering, and eminently skilled in all those arts which win popularity, being equally a favourite with the highest and lowest classes. His personal appearance was highly prepossessing; he was a model of manly beauty, of

¹ The bodies of the two Lorraine princes were buried in quick-lime, and in a few hours all the flesh was consumed. The bones were secretly deposited in a place only known to the king and his most devoted friends. Henry seems to have been afraid lest the priests should have converted them into relics.—*Davila*, p. 373.

gracious aspect, elegant deportment, and athletic frame of body. The soldiers admired his courage, the clergy lauded his zeal for the church, the women were fascinated by his graceful manners.¹ But an insatiable ambition perverted all his virtues; religion was a cloak under which he masked his criminal designs, and he is stained with the mean vice of hypocrisy. To compass his private ends, he became the pensioner and the tool of Spain, and hazarded the independence of his country to seize its sceptre. His hands were red with the blood of Saint Bartholomew's day, nor can his indignities to the dead body of Coligny be in any degree extenuated. If he sought to punish the suspected murderer of his father, revenge should have ceased when the victim was slain. Henry III. is not to be justified for the assassination of his rebellious subject; the answer of Grillon is his condemnation: still it is certain that the popularity of the duke was so immense, that a judicial conviction was almost impossible, and if he took the life of Guise, it was to save his own. A rebellion fomented by causes purely political, may be suppressed by the regular process of law, but when it assumes a religious character, severer instruments must be used. Fanaticism will neither listen to justice nor reason; it appeals to the passions; and as it employs violence for its weapon, it can only be subdued by severity and force.

At the closing of the States of Blois, Catharine of Medicis died, in the seventieth year of her age, on

¹ The Marechale de Retz, speaking of him and his family, said, "Ils avoient si bonne mine, ces Princes Lorrains, qu'aupres d'eux, les autres princes paroissoient peuple."

the 5th of January, 1589. She had survived three sons, and, as she descended into the tomb, saw the sceptre falling from the hands of the fourth. During thirty years this remarkable woman played a distinguished part, not only in the policy of France, but of Europe. She was better versed in diplomacy than female intrigue, and is said to have been virtuous in an unchaste court. By adopting the fatal plan of attempting to govern by balancing parties, and constituting herself their umpire, she lost the confidence both of Catholics and Calvinists, and outlived her popularity. Her talents were of a high order, and her moral courage was admired both by friends and enemies. On her death-bed, she advised her son to reconcile himself with the King of Navarre and the Princes of Bourbon.

News of the tragedy acted at Blois reached Paris, the day after the assassination of Guise. Popular indignation vented itself in the bitterest and fiercest execration. Sermons were preached on the martyrdom of the duke ; the king was compared to Herod. Intelligence of the death of the Cardinal of Guise soon followed : the outcries of fury were now louder and deeper ; Henry was denounced as a favourer of heresy, an enemy to holy church, who had dyed his hands in the blood of a bishop. Priest and layman panted for revenge. The statues of the king were broken, the royal arms effaced ; he was called simply Henry of Valois. The Sorbonne declared that he had forfeited the crown, and that his subjects not only might, but ought to cast off their allegiance.¹

¹ The Sorbonne were not unanimous. Jehan Fabray, dean of the college, a man of profound learning, Robert Vauvarin

This resolution was forwarded to Rome for the sanction of the pope.

The council of SIXTEEN took advantage of this excitement to make themselves complete masters of Paris. They arrested Harlai, the first president, and all the counsellors of Paris, ' except Peter Seguier and James Augustus de Thou, who escaped. Barnabe Brisson, a man of learning, replaced Harlai. One hundred and sixty members were assembled on the 13th of January, 1589, who published a decree, binding themselves to combine together for the defence of the Catholic religion, the safety of Paris, and such other cities as might join the league,—to oppose those who had assassinated the Catholic princes, avenge their murder, and defend the liberty and dignity of the states of France against all persons whomsoever, without any distinction.

and Denis Sorbin, two of the senior doctors, argued, that even if all alleged against the king were true, he could not be said to have forfeited the kingdom, and they denied that it was lawful for the people to refuse their obedience. This moderate counsel was overruled by the younger and more fanatical priests.—*Davila*, p. 378.

¹ On this occasion, Bussy-le-Clerc, originally a fencing-master, now chief of the Sixteen, and Governor of the Bastille, entered the grand hall of parliament with fifty of his statellites. He presented a petition, or rather a peremptory order, to compel the senate to disavow the royal family. On their refusal, he incarcerated in the Bastille all who opposed his party; he allowed them no other fare but bread and water, to compel them to purchase their liberty. On this account he was called the Grand-Penitentiary of Parliament. His real name was simply Le Clerc, but when the troubles of the times raised him into some importance, he took the surname of Bussy, as though he had become as redoubtable as Bussy d'Amboise. He also called himself Bussy GRANDE-PUISSANCE.—*Notes to the Henriade*.

The signal of rebellion, given in the capital, was responded to by most of the provinces. Orleans, the strong-hold of Calvinism, at the beginning of the religious wars, joined the league; Chartres, which had received the fugitive king after the day of the barricades, followed its example. All the towns in the Isle of France made common cause with the Parisians. Rouen, with the greater part of the parliament of Normandy, and all the cities of that province, except Caen, abandoned their allegiance. Picardy rose in arms. Excepting Chalons, all Champagne declared against the king. Dijon, the capital of Burgundy, with its parliament, revolted. In Languedoc, Toulouse and its parliament joined the league. The Duke of Merceur, Governor of Brittany, though brother-in-law to the king, abandoned him. Marseilles, Bordeaux, and Lyons defied the royal authority. City was opposed to city, castle to castle. France was rent asunder by domestic fury, and parties assumed the titles of Huguenots and Catholics, Royalists and Leaguers, White Forces and Holy Union, Navarrists and Lorrainists.

The king endeavoured to appease the indignation of the country, by proving the treason of the Duke of Guise. Writings, letters, and accounts were exhibited, showing the correspondence carried on with Spain and Savoy, the terms of the alliance, and the amount of monies remitted to arm the league against the throne. But the people were not in a temper to listen to evidence; they were the slaves of their unbridled passions: they wanted not truth, but vengeance. Neither was Henry more successful

in his attempt to appease the anger of the pope. When his holiness heard of the murder of the Cardinal of Guise, and the imprisonment of the Cardinal of Bourbon and Archbishop of Lyons, he gave way to the most violent impulses of rage, declaring that the king had violated all laws, human and divine, and ruthlessly trampled under foot the privileges of holy church. He refused to listen to any explanation offered by the French ambassadors, and determined to appoint a special council of cardinals to investigate the affairs of France. Sixtus V. hoped to avail himself of this opportunity to revive the pretensions of his predecessors over the temporalities of princes.

In the mean time the affairs of the league acquired stability, and assumed an organized character. The Duchess of Montpensier wrote to her brother, the Duke of Mayenne, to come to Paris: he did so, and was appointed lieutenant-general of the kingdom. The provisional government was vested in a council of forty of the most distinguished leaguers; the Sixteen retained special authority in the capital. The king made overtures to Mayenne; they were rejected. He next sent the Bishop of Mans to Rome, to demand absolution for the murder of Guise. The mission was unsuccessful. It was vainly argued that the cardinal was a traitor; the pope answered that evidence of the fact ought to have been forwarded to him, and that he would have awarded punishment. It was rejoined, that prelates, guilty of rebellion, were amenable to the civil tribunals and the royal prerogative, guaranteed by the privileges of the Gallican church. This plea Sixtus treated as

an insult to himself, and a contempt of the pontifical supremacy. The Venetian and Florentine ambassadors interceded in behalf of Henry, and the Bishop of Mans, encouraged by their support, presented a very humble and submissive petition, praying for the absolution of his royal master. The request was evaded; his holiness stipulating for the release of the Cardinal of Bourbon and the Archbishop of Lyons, as a preliminary measure, as the only proof he would receive of the king's repentance. When asked to revoke and nullify the sentence of the Sorbonne, he admitted that their decree was presumptuous, and merited his censure; but he refused to interpose his authority till Henry had given him full satisfaction.

While these negotiations were pending, the league dispatched the Abbot of Orbais to Rome, to frustrate the exertions of the Bishop of Mans. He was well received by Sixtus, whose policy was to keep both parties in dispute, that he might profit by their quarrels. Henry, however, prevailed on Morosini, the legate, to write to the Duke of Mayenne, and request him to accept a truce. It was refused.

The position of the king was now most embarrassing. He held a sceptre he could not wield; he issued orders which none would execute. On one side of the Loire, the league ruled; on the other, the King of Navarre governed. Henry stood isolated in the centre of his kingdom. He had neither money, friends, nor armies. Under these circumstances, Epernon was received back into favour, and he advised Henry to negotiate with the King of Navarre. To unite with the Huguenot Bourbon shocked the

scrupulous conscience of the Catholic Valois; but there was no alternative, unless he abandoned his throne. At length he consented, and his ancient favourite went to the camp of the Calvinists. The legate Morosini soon heard of this arrangement, and reproached the king with seeking an alliance with heretics. Henry denied that he had given any definitive instructions to Epernon, but prayed the legate to consider the difficulties by which he was surrounded,—the refusal of the pope to give him absolution,—the hostility of the league,—the armed rebellion of the Duke of Mayenne,—and the exhausted state of the treasury. “If,” said he, “the pope will not give me his protection, and my Catholic subjects attempt to dethrone me, can I be blamed if I seek shelter with the Calvinists? It is a case of necessity, not of will.”

Morosini remained with the king, thinking, to use the words of Davila, “that the assistance of the physician was most needful, where the danger of the disease was greatest.” Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador, as soon as the mission of Epernon was divulged, went to Paris, and resided there as ambassador to the lords of the league. A truce was at once concluded between Henry and the King of Navarre, for one year, on the following conditions: That the public exercise of the Catholic religion should be restored in all places held by the Huguenots, without any exception; that the goods of the clergy should be restored to them, and all prisoners liberated; that the King of Navarre should serve the King of France personally, with four thousand foot and twelve hundred horse, whenever he might

be commanded,—and that the cities, towns, and other places held by his party, should observe the laws and constitutions of the kingdom, obey the parliaments, the king's magistrates, and receive all the ordinances which the present king had made, or might make. On the other hand, it was agreed that the King of Navarre should be put in possession of Saumur, and be allowed freely to retain it, as securing a passage over the Loire; but he was bound to deliver it up at the king's pleasure.¹

Morosini now felt it his duty to abandon the court, but Henry persuaded him to carry a written treaty of peace to Mayenne, which contained the following terms. The king offered the Duke of Lorraine the cities of Toul, Metz, and Verdun, under the control of government; Mayenne was promised the government of Burgundy, with the reversion to his son, one hundred thousand crowns in ready money, and an annual pension of forty thousand crowns; the young Duke of Guise was to obtain the government of Champagne, Saint Dizier, and Rocroy, twenty thousand crowns annually for himself, and thirty thousand crowns of ecclesiastical revenue for one of his brothers, who was to be raised to the rank of cardinal; the Duke of Nevers was to receive the government of Lyons, and ten thousand crowns annually; the Duke of Aumale, Saint Eprit de Rue, and ten thousand crowns annually; the Chevalier D'Aumale, his brother, the generalship of the infantry, and twenty thousand francs pension; and the Duke of Elbeuf, the government of Poitiers, and an annuity of ten thousand crowns.²

Concessions so ample prove the sincere desire of

¹ Davila, p. 391.

² *Ib.* p. 309

peace entertained by the king, but the excess of liberality was mistaken for fear. Mayenne rejected the terms offered: he counted on the support of Rome: he was promised men and money from Spain and Savoy.

War was instantly commenced. The Duke of Montpensier, the royalist Governor of Normandy, met with success. On the other side, Mayenne captured Vendôme, having corrupted the commandant. In the mean time the two kings were approaching each other, and at last met outside the walls of Tours, at a spot called Plessis-les-Tours, on the 30th of April, 1589. Bourbon alighted from his horse, and kneeling down, would have embraced the feet of Valois, but the latter clasped him in his arms.¹ All former enmities were forgotten, and they entered the city together, amidst the acclamations of the soldiers and inhabitants. Calvinists and Catholics united as brothers, vowing to devote their consolidated strength against the league.

Mayenne advanced against Tours, hoping to se-

¹ It was with considerable reluctance that the King of Navarre went to this interview. He feared treachery. Many of his counsellors thought Henry would take his life to purchase his own absolution from the pope. He wrote to his confidential friend Du Plessis Mornay in these terms: "The ice is broken, not without many warnings that if I went I should be a dead man: I passed the water recommending myself to God." Mornay answered, "Sire, you have done what you ought, but what none of you counsellors would have advised." Such was the apprehension of the King of Navarre, that Sully says he halted about two leagues from Tours, and took the opinion of the gentlemen who accompanied him, whether to proceed or return. Sully claims the honour of having persuaded Bourbon to trust the good faith of Valois.

cure the person of the king by a sudden attack. On his route he defeated and took prisoner the Count of Brienne. He surprised the suburbs, but Henry defended himself with courage and judgment. While victory was yet doubtful, the King of Navarre arrived with his forces, and decided the fortune of the day; but Mayenne, though driven from the field, retreated in good order. In this battle Saint Malin, one of the assassins of the Duke of Guise, was slain: the preachers of the league ascribed his death to the interposition of a particular providence, and augured from this miracle the speedy and absolute triumph of their party.

The royalists crossed the Loire, and marched onwards in the direction of Paris. When they reached Pcissy, they were joined by the foreign auxiliaries, whom the king had enlisted under his banners. These consisted of ten thousand Swiss and four thousand Germans, which, added to the detachments of the Dukes of Longueville and Montpensier, of the Baron de Givry and the King of Navarre, amounted to forty-two thousand fighting men. The terror excited by this army reduced all the towns in the neighbourhood of the capital into submission, and though Saint Cloud shut its gates, they were speedily forced. Consternation reigned in Paris; all the passages of the Seine were stopped, and the approaches to the bridges fell into the power of the royalists. Mayenne could only muster eight thousand infantry and eighteen hundred cavalry. Henry, in person, begirt the faubourg Saint Honoré, and all that side of the Louvre which borders on the river: the King of Navarre besieged the line from the fau-

bourg of Saint Martin to that of Saint Germain. The fate of the rebels seemed inevitable, but fanaticism extricated the league from its impending danger.

Within the walls of the beleagured city the priests and Jesuits endeavoured to inspire the people with fortitude, by the promise of speedy miracles. An avenger was confidently predicted, and the prediction itself raised up an instrument for its own fulfilment. James Clement, a friar of the order of Saint Dominick, born of obscure parentage, in the village of SORBONE, near to SENS, and only twenty-two years of age, maddened by religious frenzy, determined to assassinate Henry III. He made no secret of his design, and his companions, to ridicule his constant boastings, called him Captain Clement. It was boldly announced from every pulpit that it was justifiable to slay a tyrant, and at length Clement avowed his intention to the prior of his order. He communicated it to the Dukes of Mayenne and Aumale, who did not disapprove of it: the council of Sixteen applauded it. Clement was promised a cardinal's hat, if he did the deed and escaped; in the event of his being seized and executed, he was assured of canonization. The Duchess of Montpensier sacrificed all that a woman holds most dear to this young libertine, on the night that his resolution was confirmed.

In order that the assassin might have certain access to the king, the first president, Harlai, a prisoner in the Bastille, gave him a letter of introduction, and the Count of Brienne, a prisoner-of-war, furnished him with a passport. They believed that

Clement was the bearer of intelligence favourable to the royal cause. He showed his credentials to James de la Guesle, the king's attorney-general, who acted as auditor of the camp. It was evening when the murderer arrived: on the following morning, the 1st of August, 1589, he was introduced to the king. His letters being delivered, he was desired to disclose his information: Henry approached him; Clement pretended to draw another paper from his sleeve, instead of which he plunged a large knife in the abdomen of his victim, and buried the blade up to the haft. The king himself drew it from the wound, and struck it into the forehead of the friar; La Guesle ran him through with his sword; his body was hurled from the window, where it was hacked to pieces by the soldiers, burned, and the ashes thrown into the Seine.¹

At first the surgeons did not consider the wound mortal, but when they had ascertained that the intestines were pierced, all hope vanished. The dying monarch received absolution, and embracing the King of Navarre, said to him, with solemn earnestness, "Brother, I assure you, you will never be King of France, unless you turn Catholic, and hum-

¹ A pamphlet was printed on the martyrdom of James Clement, in which it was affirmed that an angel had appeared to him, and ordered him to kill the tyrant, exhibiting a naked sword. A suspicion remained with the public that some of the brethren of Clement, abusing his credulity, had themselves spoken to him in the night, and thus worked on his imagination. However that may be, Clement prepared himself for regicide, as a good Catholic would for martyrdom, by prayer, fasting, and mortification. There is no doubt of his sincerity, and that he perpetrated the crime conscientiously, believing that it was a pious act: on this account he has been represented

ble yourself to the church.”¹ The nobility being introduced, Henry said that he was not alarmed at the prospect of death, but grieved to leave the kingdom in a state of anarchy: that he desired no revenge for his death; that religion taught him to pardon injuries, which he had done on many occasions in times past: he exhorted all to recognize the King of Navarre, to whom the crown rightfully belonged, observing that he felt sure Bourbon would return into the bosom of the church, and be reconciled with the pope. He died on the night of the second and third of August, at the age of thirty-six, having reigned fifteen years and two months. With him terminated the royal house of Valois, and the posterity of Philip III., surnamed the HARDY.

Of this monarch Davila has drawn the following

rather as a poor, weak creature, led astray by his extreme simplicity, than as a villain influenced by a bad disposition. La Guesle, who had some suspicions of his loyalty, had him watched during the night that he slept at Saint Cloud. His slumber was profound; his breviary was on his bed, open at the passage which narrates the murder of Holofernes by Judith. (Notes to the *Henriade*.) Davila says that he had seen Clement at the house of Stephano Lusignano, a Cyprian bishop of Limisso. He remarks that Clement was considered a half-witted fellow, and rather a subject of sport than fear, being the butt of his associates. P. 404.

¹ “The King of Navarre,” says Cayet, “kneeled at his bedside, sighs and tears not permitting him to utter a word. He took his majesty’s hands between his and kissed them. Henry, perceiving that his cousin was silent, owing to the strong emotions by which he was agitated, embraced his head, kissed him on the cheek, and gave him his benediction.” Had not the knife been poisoned, according to Cayet, the wound would not have been fatal; but this seems an error, as it is certain that the intestines were pierced.

character : “ In Henry III. were all amiable qualities, which, in the beginning of his years, were exceedingly revered and admired : singular prudence, royal magnanimity, inexhaustible munificence, most profound piety, most ardent zeal for religion, perpetual love to the good, implacable hatred to the bad, infinite desire to benefit all, popular eloquence, affability becoming a prince, generous courage, and wonderful dexterity in arms ; for which virtues, during the reign of his brother, he was more admired and esteemed than the king himself. He was a general before he was a soldier, and a great statesman before he came to years of maturity. He made war with vigour, baffled the experience of the most famous captains, won bloody battles, took fortresses deemed impregnable, gained the hearts of people far remote, and was renowned and glorious in the mouths of all men ; but when he ascended the throne he sought out subtle inventions to free himself from the yoke and servitude of the factious, and both parties conceived such a hatred against him, that his religion was accounted hypocrisy,—his prudence, craftiness,—his policy, meanness of spirit,—his liberality, licentious and unbridled prodigality ; his courteousness was despised, his gravity hated, his name detested ; his private life was vilified as a continuous round of vice ; and his death, being extremely rejoiced at by factious men and the common people, was rashly attributed to a stroke of divine justice.”

That Henry possessed some amiable traits of character, and that his intentions were better than his actions, may be admitted ; but, if we except the

personal courage he displayed, when young, at Jarnac and Moncontour, we shall find little to admire, and much to censure. His prodigal munificence to his minions some have lauded as proofs of liberality; but it was the liberality of a reckless spendthrift, who squanders what he has not earned: the people groaned under taxes to feed the insatiable cravings of the favourites. Of the vices of this king we have not spoken: to name them would outrage decency; they are, however, abundantly and minutely detailed in the French memoirs of his days, and deprive him of all claims to morality or virtue. He had no strength of mind; and though he could display dignity on state occasions, and then *act* the king, he was weak to imbecility as a diplomatist. The Guises knew this foible, and profited by it to promote their own views: a vigorous monarch would easily have coerced that ambitious and rebellious family. With all his faults Henry possessed a most forgiving disposition, which endeared him to those who enjoyed his private society; by them he was deeply and sincerely regretted, and he had the very rare satisfaction of witnessing genuine tears flow down the cheeks of his attendants, as they awaited the hour of final separation,—a proof of affection with which kings are seldom honoured.

REIGN OF HENRY IV.

THE crime of James Clement, though it placed the crown of France on the head of the King of Navarre, according to the law and constitution of the realm, rendered his position extremely embarrassing. He was at the head of a motley army, in which little confidence could be reposed: his claim to the throne was of course recognized by the Huguenots, but these were the least numerous of the soldiery; the Catholics and the foreign auxiliaries wavered in their allegiance; some openly renounced it: even the Calvinists feared that the king, to secure the sceptre, would abandon his religion: thus doubts and distrust spread to every quarter.

On the night of the 2nd of August, the Catholic leaders assembled to deliberate on the course most expedient to be pursued. A diversity of opinion arose: one party voted to support the King of Navarre, contending that his claim was just, and if now set aside it might lead to an infraction of the Salic law, and disturb all the established rules of succession. It was further argued, that if his title was disputed, pretenders would start up in every province, each demanding a separate principality; thus the monarchy would be severed among petty sovereigns, and become a prey to civil discords, which would invite foreign interference, and place in peril

the liberties of France. The personal qualities of Henry were warmly extolled, his courage, clemency, modesty, and disinterestedness; they promised a mild, just, and tolerant government. Moreover, it was warmly urged that the nobles would disgrace their honour, by joining those who had committed regicide. The chiefs of this party were the Duke of Longueville, the Baron de Givry, and the Sieur de Rambouillet.

The opponents of Henry were numerous. They contended that they ought to obey the Divine law, regardless of consequences; that by accepting a heretic king they endangered their own souls and those of their posterity; that the example of England, where Protestant sovereigns had abolished the Romish doctrines, should warn them of the evils to be apprehended from a Huguenot monarch; that Bourbon had frequently been exhorted to renounce his heresy, but that he always refused or evaded compliance: his good qualities were admitted, but these could not be trusted for any length of time, on account of his religious tenets. The heads of this party were D'O, D'Entragues, and Dampierre, the field-marshal.

Between these two opinions arose a third, which was supported by Marshal Biron and the Dukes of Luxembourg and Epernon. They proposed that Henry should be acknowledged king, on condition that he would change his religion and embrace the Roman Catholic faith. They urged that this accorded with the dying declaration of Henry III., who had nominated the King of Navarre his lawful successor, but admonished him that he would

never reign in peace, unless he reconciled himself to the Church of Rome.

This last resolution was handed by the Duke of Luxembourg to Bourbon, who steered a middle course, neither accepting nor rejecting the overtures of the Catholic lords. He thanked them for acknowledging his legitimate claim, but declined any hasty recantation of his opinions, as though extorted from him by a dagger at his throat. He promised to consider the subject, and give a definitive answer when his judgment was satisfied; in the meantime he offered to guarantee the free exercise of the Catholic religion in all the privileges that it possessed at the death of his predecessor.¹ The royal offer was accepted—the Catholics in the camp acknowledged Henry of Bourbon as their lawful prince, and took an oath of fidelity to him as King of France. On his side he swore to instruct himself in the mysteries of religion within six months, or convene a general council, to whose decrees he would submit. On the 4th of August this contract was signed and registered in the parliament of Tours.

This agreement, however, did not consolidate the power of the king, or prevent desertion from his camp. The first who abandoned him was the Duke of Epernon,² on the plea of having been treated dis-

¹ La Noue, a decided Huguenot, and deeply experienced in the world, told Henry, without reserve, that he must abandon all hopes of being King of France, unless he became a Catholic.—*Davila*, p. 410.

² The King of Navarre and Epernon had quarrelled during the reign of Henry III. Epernon tried to disgrace him with Valois, on which Bourbon told him, that if he thought to use him as he had done the Lords of Guise, he would find his mistake.

courteously, he claiming precedency over Marshals Biron and Aumont, which was disallowed. Many other noblemen imitated this example, and by the 7th of August the army was diminished one half. The defection of the Swiss was only prevented through the earnest persuasions of Marshal Biron: even several of the Huguenots quitted the royal standard. The conduct of the princes of the blood was equally embarrassing to the king. Six of them were now living—the old Cardinal of Bourbon, the Cardinal of Vendome, the Count of Soissons, the Prince of Conti, the Duke of Montpensier, and his son, called the Prince of Dombes. Each of them had pretensions of his own: the Count of Soissons, who had already embroiled himself with Henry, was now intriguing to deprive him of the throne, unless he recanted. We have seen that this resolution had been taken by many of the nobles, and Francis D'O, superintendent of the finances, had the insolence to repeat this menace to the king's face. Henry replied with firmness, tempered with mildness, testifying a wish to retain their friendship, but showing no alarm at their hostility. It was also difficult for the king to preserve those provinces which seemed docile to his command; for the governors, believing that he would never free himself from his complicated difficulties, thought the moment

Epernon had said, more than once, that the King of Navarre made war, not as a sovereign but as a freebooter. Their old quarrel was not pacified.—*Davila*, p. 496.

¹ Henry IV. received such important services upon this occasion from Marshal Biron, that it was reported that it was he who made him king; and the marshal is said to have reproached Henry with his services in those very terms.—*Brantome*, c. iii. p. 366.

favourable for parcelling out France into small principalities, and each was plotting to obtain the sovereignty of his province. Such were the views of Montmorenci in Languedoc, and Lesdiguières in Dauphiny.

Turenne was enamoured of a speculation of his own. He meditated the organization of a single republic, composed of all the reformed churches of the kingdom: his object was, to place it under the protection of the elector-palatine, from whom all needful succours might be drawn: he aspired to be chief of this Calvinist confederation, with the title of lieutenant-general to that elector; but in the scheme he only showed a criminal wish to dismember the empire, and very little judgment. In fact, nothing was more chimerical than the attempt to govern by the same laws the several Huguenot churches, scattered over the whole surface of France, and separated from each other by Catholic churches. There could be no effective union among parties thus cut off from all regular communication in case of war, so that the king had no dread of this association. All he feared was, lest the wild schemes of Turenne might delude the Huguenots into an attempt to accomplish what was really impracticable: in fact *they* did not deem it impracticable. The most ambitious among them pretended that it was quite easy of execution, in order to attract troops to their banner, and they partially succeeded with many simple persons, who were induced to shake off their allegiance, on being told that Henry would sooner or later recant, and then abandon them. Thus Bourbon encountered opposition where he had a right to expect support,

and was betrayed even by his friends. Let us enter Paris, and examine the strength and tactics of his enemies.

When the news of Henry the Third's murder reached Paris, the leaguers of the capital were transported with a ferocious joy. The Duchess of Montpensier embraced the messenger who brought the intelligence, exclaiming, "This is happiness indeed! I am only vexed that he did not know, before he died, that I sharpened the knife!" This avowal puts beyond doubt the favours she conferred on Clement. She traversed the streets with the Duchess of Nemours, crying out, "Good news, my friends! good news! the tyrant is dead! We shall have no more of Henry of Valois!" She proposed that the mourning should be in bright green, and distributed a great number of scarfs of that colour. The Duchess of Nemours went to the church of the Cordeliers, ascended the steps of the altar, and pronounced the most severe censures on the murdered monarch. In every quarter of Paris bonfires were lighted and fireworks exhibited. Defences of James Clement were published: his portrait was engraved in various sizes; it was placed on the altars of the metropolitan churches. His mother having come to Paris, the Jesuits persuaded the populace to reverence the blessed mother of the sainted martyr, and even proposed to erect a statue in the church of Notre Dame to the regicide monk. Sixtus V., in full consistory, lauded the assassin with the most extravagant praise; he even said, that the crime, for usefulness, might be compared to the incarnation and resurrection of the

Saviour; and, for heroism, to the actions of Judith and Eleazar.

The council of Sixteen continued to insult Henry IV. denying his royal title, and calling him simply the Navarrais, the Bearnois; and the chiefs of the league availed themselves of the popular frenzy to revive the almost hopeless prospects of their criminal ambition. Of the formidable house of Guise the Duke of Mayenne was now the chief: him the Duchess of Montpensier urged to seize the throne. From this he was dissuaded by Villeroy and the president, Jeannin—moreover, Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador, would have opposed his election, as his master had designs upon the crown for himself, and Mayenne could never have held out against the King of Navarre, had he openly thwarted the views of Philip, on whose aid he mainly depended. For these reasons he proclaimed the Cardinal of Bourbon, then a prisoner in Chinon, and this nomination was confirmed by the council of the league. The new king assumed the title of Charles the Tenth.

It was fortunate for Henry IV. that his enemies were divided among themselves. The pope did not enter heartily and sincerely into the views of Spain. He found Philip already too strong for the Vatican, and he foresaw, that if he became King of France, and retained the Low Countries, the sovereign pontiff would be reduced to a mere head chaplain to the court of Madrid. He, therefore, willingly acknowledged the Cardinal of Bourbon, nor would he have hesitated to recognize the King of Navarre, provided he renounced Calvinism, so great

was his dread lest France should fall under the dominion of the house of Austria.

The revolt of the Low Countries prevented Philip from sending into France a force sufficiently strong for its conquest. He trusted as much to his wily and deceitful policy as to his armies ; and having as yet no settled plan, he was disposed to regulate his conduct by circumstances. If unable to place the crown of France on his own head, he hoped to give it to some nobleman who would marry his daughter; if that scheme failed, through the rivalry of the different competitors who might aspire to her hand, he intended to dismember the kingdom, by parcelling it out into different small principalities : as a last alternative he was prepared to recognize the King of Navarre, on his yielding up some provinces. With these views he secretly fomented jealousies among the chiefs of the league, giving to all great hopes and small assistance, by which plan he expected to become chief arbiter of the differences. But the most refined and dexterous duplicity becomes suspected when often repeated, because the very act of deception ultimately opens the eyes of those deceived. Philip already began to be suspected. The leaders of the Catholics knew that he would not render such aid to any one of their body as would confer a preponderating influence ; they felt that they had been the duped instruments of his ambition, and now determined to make use of his resources, without allowing him to exercise any decided authority.

The King of Navarre divided his army, greatly thinned by desertion, into three squadrons ; one commanded by the Duke of Longueville, Governor of

Picardy, held in check the Spaniards, who menaced the invasion of that province ; the second, entrusted to the Duke D'Aumont, covered Champagne ; the king led the third into Normandy, and encamped at Dieppe, there to await the arrival of the English auxiliaries, promised him by Elizabeth. Mayenne marched against him, at the head of thirty-thousand men. The royal army was reduced to six thousand foot and fourteen hundred horse, and such was the extremity of the king's position, that he was on the point of retiring into England, which Marshal Biron prevented, by advising him to make good his stand at Arques.¹

“Sire,” said Biron, “the majority of the council propose that you should quit the kingdom. I am of opinion, that were you not actually in France, you should enter it at all hazards. Will you voluntarily expatriate yourself, and do an act of your own accord which the whole strength of your enemies must fail to accomplish ? In your position, Sire, to quit France for twenty-four hours would be tantamount to perpetual banishment. The danger, however, is not so great as it is painted ; those who now approach to attack us are the very men we held enclosed in Paris, or others equally worthy of contempt. Finally, we are on our native soil ; let us tread it as conquerors, or be buried in its bosom. A kingdom is the stake ; let us win it or die. Even were there no safety for your person but in flight, better a thousand times to perish than live dishonoured.

¹ Before the battle of Arques Henry said, “that he was a king without a kingdom, a husband without a wife, and a warrior without money.”

Your majesty should never let it be said, that a scion of the house of Lorraine expelled you from your hereditary dominions, to beg your bread at the gate of a foreign prince. No, no, Sire, neither crown nor honour await you beyond the sea. If you importune England for succour, she will hold back; if you present yourself before the port of Rochelle as a fugitive, you will be loaded with reproach. I cannot think that you ought to trust your person to the uncertainty of the sea or the mercy of strangers, when so many brave gentlemen, and so many veteran soldiers are ready to spill their blood in your defence: and I am too faithful a servant of your majesty to dissemble, that if you sought for safety any where but in virtue, they would seek their safety under some other leader."

The wavering resolution of Henry was fixed by this manly harangue, and he determined to give battle at Arques. Mayenne advanced slowly with thirty thousand men, announcing on his road that he was going to seize the Bearnois, and lead him bound hand and foot, to Paris. At the end of the causeway at Arques, there is a long winding hill, covered with coppice, beneath is a space of arable land, in the midst of which is the great road that leads to Arques, having thick hedges on each side. Lower down, upon the left hand, there is a kind of great marsh or boggy ground. A village called Martin Eglise bounds the hill, about half a league from the causeway. It was in this village, and in the neighbourhood of it, that the whole army of the Duke of Mayenne was encamped. The king ordered deep trenches to be cut at the causeway, above and be-

neath the great road, posting twelve hundred Swiss on each side of this road, and six hundred German foot to defend the upper trenches : he placed a thousand to twelve hundred others in a chapel he found in the midst of the upper and lower trenches : these were all the infantry he had ; his cavalry, which amounted in all to only six hundred men, he divided into two equal parties.¹

On the 21st of September, 1589, Mayenne assaulted the royalists. The Germans in his army got possession of the upper trenches, in which their countrymen were placed, by lowering their arms, as if they intended to desert their colours and unite with their brethren. But this stratagem only met with temporary success ; the leaguers were soon expelled from the position they had gained. The king plunged into the thickest of the fight, and was in such imminent peril that he exclaimed, “ Are there not fifty gentlemen who have courage to die in company with their king ? ” At this juncture, had Mayenne advanced rapidly with his cavalry, the complete defeat of the royalists would have been inevitable : the Duke was so tardy in his movements, that Châtillon, son of the deceased Admiral Coligny, was enabled to march up with two regiments of infantry to the aid of Henry, whom he rescued from almost certain death. A dense fog, which had prevailed during the early part of the battle, clearing up, the cannon, mounted on the castle of Arques, were brought into play, and with such terrible effect, that the army of the league retreated in disorder, leaving the royalists in possession of the field. Mayenne re-

¹ Sully, c. iii.

tired into Picardy, whence he intended to proceed to Flanders, to concert new measures with the Spaniards.¹

While the duke was besieging the camp and lines of Arques, the emissaries of the league circulated reports in Paris most flattering to their cause. Three banners, which the Germans had seized on entering the upper trenches, as described, were sent to the Duchess of Montpensier, and from these models she caused many more to be made, which were exhibited as trophies of victory. So convinced were the Parisians of the capture of the king, that windows were hired in the principal streets, to have a view of his entrance into the capital, tied on the back of a lame horse. This illusion was soon dissipated.

A few days after the battle of Arques, the king, being joined by the Duke of Longueville and Marshal D'Aumont, with considerable reinforcements, pursued the army of the league, and entered triumphantly into Amiens, the chief city of Picardy. While he was there engaged in re-organizing his army, four thousand English, and one thousand Scotch auxiliaries, sent by Elizabeth, reached his camp, and delivered to him twenty-two thousand pounds sterling, a larger sum of money than he had

¹ Sixtus V. predicted that the Bearnois would succeed, saying that he was no longer in bed than Mayenne was at table. The duke was proverbial for the slowness of his motions. "If he does not act in another manner," said the king, "I shall certainly always beat him in the field." (Perexfie.) After the battle of Arques the same pope applied these words to Henry IV. "*Super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis, et conculcabis leonem et draconem*;" meaning by the asp the Duke of Mayenne, the Duke of Savoy by the basilisk, the King of Spain by the lion, and himself by the dragon.

ever possessed during his whole career ; he immediately distributed the whole of it among his troops. The king now mustered twenty thousand foot, three thousand cavalry, and fourteen large cannon.¹ With these forces he marched against Paris, and on the 1st of January, 1589, assaulted the suburbs of the capital. In this attack nine hundred of the Parisians perished, and a large booty was collected from the opulent faubourg of St. Germain, by which many of the soldiers were greatly enriched.² Four hundred prisoners were taken, among whom was Edmund Burgoin, prior of the order of Jacobins, who being convicted on evidence of having applauded the assassination of Henry III. from the pulpit, and of having instigated Clement to the murder, was sentenced to be drawn in pieces by four horses, his members burned, and his ashes scattered to the wind. This sentence was executed a few months afterwards, by a judgment of the parliament of Tours.

On hearing of the siege of Paris, Mayenne advanced from the confines of Flanders to its relief, and the king retired to Tours, where he was acknowledged King of France by the Cardinals of Vendome and Lenoncour, and the nobles assembled in that city. About the same time the title of Henry was recognized by Venice, and that republic ap-

¹ Davila, p. 424.

² Sully boasts that he himself obtained three thousand crowns for his own share, and confesses that all his men made very considerable booty. c. iii. Châtillon, son of Admiral Coligny, distinguished himself greatly on this occasion, as though he was resolved to appease the manes of his father, and avenge the horrors of St. Bartholomew's day.

pointed Mocenigo their ambassador at his court, in spite of the remonstrances of the pope. The king then marched into Normandy, and on the 13th December, 1589, the whole of the lower province, with the exception of Harfleur, fell into his power.

At the commencement of the following year the pope resolved openly to espouse the cause of the league, and sent to Paris, as his legate, the Cardinal Cajetan, to whom he gave three hundred thousand crowns, which were to be tendered as a ransom for the Cardinal of Bourbon. After many difficulties the legate arrived in Paris, on the 20th January, 1590, and published letters missive from his holiness, by which all Roman Catholics were commanded to unite for the extirpation of heresy, and obey the orders of Cajetan in whatever related to things spiritual. These letters were accepted by the parliament of Paris, but the parliament of Tours not only rejected them, but denied the authority of the legate even to remain in France in an official capacity, he not having presented any credentials to the king.

Though the avowed protection of the pope had given some increased confidence to the more fanatical members of the league, the affairs of the confederacy were still very doubtful and embarrassed. Its leaders had rival pretensions, and were divided against each other. Mayenne hoped to seize the crown for himself and his posterity, but failing in that, he was determined that France should neither be dismembered, nor transferred to a foreign prince. The King of Spain, who had already spent two millions of gold in fomenting civil discord, and on whom the

chief burthen of the war still rested, aimed at uniting France to Spain, or at least to settle the former on his daughter, the Infanta Isabella, by his marriage with Elizabeth, eldest sister of Henry III. In the mean time he insisted upon being declared the protector of the crown, with the full exercise of the royal prerogative, and in these views he was favoured by the common people of Paris, and the priests. The nobility of the league, mindful of the services of the house of Guise, inclined to the cause of Mayenne. Many of the parliament of Paris secretly supported the king, hoping that he would ultimately return to the church. The Duke of Lorraine endeavoured to secure the throne for his son, the Marquis Du Pont, born from his marriage with Claude, another sister of Henry III. ; and, as the head of his family, he was highly displeased with Mayenne, one of its younger branches, for aspiring to the sovereignty. The Duke of Savoy also put forth a claim to the kingdom, because he was the son of Margaret, sister of Henry II. Failing in their principal scheme, these two princes kept in reserve a minor policy : the Duke of Lorraine wished to secure Metz, Toul, Verdun, and the Duchy of Sedan, while the Duke of Savoy, still in possession of the Marquisate of Saluzzo, hoped to retain it, and also seize on the whole of Provence. The Duke of Nemours wished to convert his government of Lyons into an independent seignory, and the Duke of Mercœur plotted to make himself supreme in Brittany, which province, by ancient title, he pretended was the lawful inheritance of his wife. Such were among the diversified views and conflicting interests of the chiefs of the

league, and their conduct clearly shows, that under the pretext of religion, they merely sought to promote their personal ambition.

The king, aware of the discord and rivalry that distracted the councils of his enemies, sent the Count of Belin, who had been taken prisoner at Arques, on parole, with propositions to Mayenne, who, after much hesitation, rejected them, still clinging to the hope of securing the crown for himself. The Duke persuaded the legate to give him the three hundred thousand crowns, originally destined for the ransom of the Cardinal of Bourbon, of whose liberation indeed there was no hope. The Spanish auxiliaries marched from Flanders, and joined the army of Mayenne, and their united forces laid siege to Meulan, a small town on the Seine, but of importance, as the occupation of it by the royalists obstructed the conveyance of provisions by the river into Paris.

The king, who was then quartered between Lisieux and Ponteau de Mer, with the intention of besieging Honfleur, hastened to the relief of Meulan. After an unsuccessful attack, which lasted twenty-five days, Mayenne was compelled to raise the siege, and Henry determined to assault the city of Dreux. This movement so alarmed the Parisians that they broke out into mutiny, and insisted on Mayenne trying the fate of a pitched battle. His army consisted of twenty thousand foot and four thousand five hundred horse; the royalists only mustered eight thousand infantry and three thousand cavalry. They met at Ivry, on the 14th of March, 1590, when Henry obtained a complete victory. Six thousand of the league perished, among whom were the Count

of Egmont, who commanded the Spaniards, and the Duke of Brunswick, who commanded the Germans. Sixteen French and twenty Swiss colours, eight pieces of cannon, with all the baggage and ammunition attached to the camp, fell into the hands of the conquerors. The loss of the royalists was five hundred killed and two hundred wounded, among the latter were Marshal Biron and Sully, the latter of whom received seven wounds.¹

Though the king did not derive from this victory the advantages that ought to have accrued, a mutiny

¹ Davila, p. 449. Before the battle commenced the king thus addressed his troops: "My companions! if this day you run my fortune, I also run yours. I am resolved to die or conquer with you. Keep your ranks, I beseech you, but if you should quit them in the heat of the battle, rally immediately; if you should lose sight of your colours keep my white plume of feathers always in view: it will lead you to victory and glory."—*Perefixe*. De Thou and Cayet observe, that Henry's artillery fired nine times before Mayenne's began. They also blame the duke for having disposed his army in the shape of a crescent, like Henry's, when being superior in number he ought to have given it the form of a triangle. According to Matthieu, the king was guilty of a great error, in not commencing the battle by falling upon the light-horse, commanded by Du Terrail, and on the division commanded by the Duke of Mayenne, who having advanced too far, was obliged to make a circuit of half a league in retreating.

The Count of Egmont was son of Admiral Egmont, who was decapitated at Brussels with the Prince of Horn. The son, who remained attached to the party of Philip II. King of Spain, was sent to the aid of the Duke of Mayenne, at the head of eighteen hundred lancers. On his entrance into Paris he received the compliments of the municipal body. The president in his address praised Admiral Egmont. "Do not speak of him," said the count: "he was a rebel, and merited death;" language the more to be condemned, as he was then speaking to rebels whose cause he was about to support by force of arms.—*Notes to the Henriade*.

having arisen among the Swiss, who clamoured for their arrears of pay, he, however, advanced to Meulan, seven leagues distant from Paris, on the banks of the Seine, and captured it after a slight resistance. There he received Villeroy, attached to the league, who prayed him to grant a cessation of arms, which was refused. A similar request was renewed by Mocenigo, the Venetian envoy, but it also was rejected, the king complaining bitterly of the cardinal legate, whom he accused of acting rather as a Spaniard than as a churchman. Such of the Parisians as were suspected of desiring peace, were seized, and either executed or cast into the river, as enemies to the Roman Catholic faith, infected with the poison of heresy, and as favourers of a relapsed and excommunicated monarch. In order to keep up the enthusiasm of the populace, the prelates, priests, and monks of the several orders paraded the streets in solemn procession, arrayed in their religious robes, carrying guns and swords in their hands; while the Duke of Nemours, governor of the city, the principal military commanders, and the magistrates, swore to defend the city to the last man, rather than acknowledge a heretic prince. The Bishop of Paris consented that the church-plate should be melted into money for the relief of the poor. Under these circumstances the royal army blockaded Paris, with the intent of reducing it by famine.

At this period the Cardinal of Bourbon, recognized as king by the league, under the title of Charles X., died at Fontenay, having publicly acknowledged the right of his nephew. This event embarrassed the confederates. Hitherto all procla-

mations had been issued in his name, and all the decrees of the parliament were authenticated under his nominal sanction: in several towns money had been coined, bearing his effigies; it was now a question who was the head of the government, but still all agreed on rejecting Henry, and the decrees of the Sorbonne had the force of law. Mayenne proposed a convocation of the states-general at Meaux, for the election of a king, himself still retaining the title of lieutenant-general, and then journeyed to Condé, on the frontiers, to confer with Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma, who commanded all the Spanish forces.

Philip had resolved to assist the league, but his ultimate views were indistinctly defined. His main object had been to gain the throne for himself; but that scheme now appeared hopeless, as he clearly perceived that, in the event of the overthrow of the Calvinist party, Mayenne would claim the prize for himself. Still he desired the exclusion of Henry, whom he had rendered an implacable enemy; for should he succeed, he dreaded his assisting the Protestants of the Low Countries with the united power of France. Of two evils he, therefore, inclined to choose the least, and determined to support Mayenne, on whose neutrality he could at least depend, if not on his co-operation. The Duke of Parma, one of the most wary diplomatists and able generals of his age, remonstrated against quitting Flanders; but his opinion was overruled by the court of Madrid: nevertheless, though forced to march, he was resolved not to hazard any decisive battle, which might bring the civil war to a conclusion; for, by

protracting it, he hoped so to weaken both parties as to secure a complete ascendancy to Philip, and constitute him the sole umpire and dictator of the exhausted country.

In the meanwhile the beleaguered city suffered dreadfully from famine. Such was the scarcity that a bushel of corn sold for one hundred and twenty crowns. The only bread, and that very scarce, was made of oats. Horses, dogs, asses, and mules were used as meat; and they were delicacies, as Davila expressly says, "publicly sold for the families of the greatest lords." The poor fed on herbs and grass, which they picked up in yards and streets, and on the ramparts: these produced such cruel disease that many died. Excessive heat following excessive rain increased the general sickness. Even the bones of the dead were ground down into powder and greedily devoured¹ There was no firewood, and the flesh of beasts was eaten raw. Skins and hides were boiled. The extremity to which the city was reduced raises at once our compassion and horror. In the space of a month thirty thousand persons died of hunger, and, dreadful to relate, even mothers fed upon their children.²

"I must be permitted," says Sully, "slightly

¹ It was Mendoza, Spanish ambassador to the league, who advised the manufacture of bread out of bones; a recommendation which was carried into effect, and only served to shorten the days of many thousands of men. This act forcibly exemplifies the weakness and waywardness of the human mind. The besieged would not have dared to have eaten the *flesh* of their countrymen, after being slain; but they scrupled not to pulverize and feed upon their *bones*.—*Notes to the Henriade*.

² See the verses in the *Henriade*, canto x. p. 193.

to pass over these occurrences : I cannot with any pleasure enlarge on so dreadful a subject. The king, naturally compassionate, was moved with the distress of the Parisians : he could not bear the thought of seeing this city, the empire of which was destined for him by Providence, become one vast church-yard. He secretly permitted everything that could contribute to its relief, and affected not to observe the supplies of provisions, which the officers and soldiers suffered to enter the city, either out of compassion to their relations and friends who were in it, or with a design to make the citizens pay dear for them. Without doubt he imagined this conduct would gain for him the hearts of the Parisians, but he was deceived ; they enjoyed his benefits without ceasing to look upon him as the author of their calamities, and, elated with the Duke of Parma's arrival, they insulted him, who only raised the siege, because he was too much affected by the miseries of the besieged.¹

Perefixe, Cayet, and others are of opinion, that the king was withheld from taking Paris by storm, and from yielding to the repeated entreaties of his soldiers, particularly of the Huguenots, by his having perceived that on this occasion they were resolved to revenge the massacre of St. Bartholomew, by putting all within Paris to the sword. " The Duke of Nemours," says Perefixe, " sent all useless mouths out of Paris ; the king's council opposed his granting them free passage ; but he, being informed of the dreadful scarcity to which these miserable wretches were reduced, ordered that they

¹ Sully, c. iv.

should not be molested." "I am not surprised," said Henry, "that the Spaniards and chiefs of the league have no compassion on these poor people; they are only tyrants: as for me, I am their father and king, and cannot bear the recital of their calamities, without being pierced to my inmost soul, and ardently desiring to give them relief."¹ The Cardinal of Gondy, Bishop of Paris, having been sent, during the siege, to make Henry propositions of peace, "I will not dissemble," said he, "but discover my sentiments to you freely; I am willing to grant you peace; I desire it myself. I would give one finger to have a battle, and two to have a general peace. I love my city of Paris, I am jealous of her; I am desirous of doing her service, and would grant her more favours than she demands of me; but I would grant them voluntarily, and not be compelled to it by the King of Spain or the Duke of Mayenne." It may be added that Henry expected the Parisians would capitulate before the Duke of Parma's arrival. They owed their safety chiefly to the Duke Nemours, whose gallant defence has been highly praised. The people seconded him with an obstinate fortitude, which had more of fury than true courage. A regiment of monks and priests were organized, grotesquely armed above their frocks.

Such, however, was the distress of the people, that any protracted resistance became nearly hopeless; for the German soldiers in Paris began to mutiny, for want of pay, and Davila expressly declares that they killed all the children they could seize

¹ Prefixe, p. 2.

and ate them.¹ The Duke of Nemours at length wrote to Mayenne, stating that, unless he was relieved within ten days, he should be compelled to capitulate; on which the latter advanced with his army as far as Meaux, a town ten leagues from Paris, and on the 23rd of August, 1590, he was joined by the Duke of Parma.

When the king heard that these reinforcements were so near the capital, he called a council-of-war, when it was decided that he should raise the siege, which he did on the 30th of August, and marched to Chéelles,² a spacious village, about six leagues from Paris, and four from Meaux, intending from that position to oppose the march of the Duke of Parma to the capital.³ Chéelles is seated in a fenny plain, and overflowed by the waters of a little rivulet, which stands in pools about its walls. It has on both sides a wide, open country, and in front two hills, on whose ascent is the high-road from Meaux to Paris. From this encampment the king sent a herald to the Duke of Mayenne, challenging him to fight, and urging him to rise forth from his den, where he lay like a fox rather than like a lion."

¹ Page 469.

² The intention of the king was to take up his position at Claye; Marshal Biron persuaded him to change his opinion and encamp at Chéelles. This last town was condemned by Sully, and to that single fault he attributes all the honour the Duke of Parma gained by taking Lagny, and relieving Paris, without fighting a battle.—*Sully*, c. iv.

³ De Thou says, that Henry IV. was obliged to pretend that he only raised the siege of Paris, in order to go and meet the Prince of Parma, and give him battle, fearing that his soldiers, whom the hopes of the plunder of Paris had alone induced to remain with him, should abandon their colours. *Liv. xix.*

Mayenne sent the herald to the Duke of Parma, who caustically answered, "that he knew very well what to do for the attainment of his own ends, and that he had not travelled so far to take counsel of an enemy; that he saw clearly enough his way of proceeding did not please the king; but that, if he were so great a soldier as fame reported him to be, he would show his skill, by forcing him to a battle against his will; but that, for his own part, he would never put to the caprice of fortune what he had already safe in his own hands."¹

The Duke of Parma, confident in the superiority of his military tactics, executed a manœuvre, by which he completely triumphed over the king. He encamped on a hill opposite the royalists, and drew out his army in battle array; the royalists were ready to receive him in the plain below, but as soon as he saw all their forces there collected, he turned suddenly towards Lagny, so that his rear-guard became his van-guard. Lagny is seated on the Marne, in such a manner that the suburbs, though consisting of but few houses, stand on the bank of that river, on which side both armies were, and the town is built on the left bank; the passage between them is by a large bridge, and the Marne was the principal river by which provisions could be conveyed into Paris. Here La Fin commanded for the king, and surprised at being thus attacked by the whole army of the league, he abandoned the suburbs, and broke down the bridge, retiring with his garrison to defend the circuit of the town. The Duke of Parma immediately occupied the suburbs, and

¹ Davila, p. 472.

strengthened them against any attack, and in the night planted his artillery in front of Lagny, which La Fin despised, as the river was between him and his enemy. But the royalist commander was soon deceived; for the duke had thrown a bridge of boats across the stream, two leagues above the town, and landed troops, which marched on Lagny, ready to assault it as soon as the cannon had rendered the breach practicable. This was speedily effected. The Italians and Walloons rushed in; La Fin was taken prisoner and the castle surrendered. Henry IV. had the mortification to witness this important position captured, and the slaughter of his soldiers, without being able to render any assistance. He was compelled to march back to his old quarters. Lagny being thus taken, the passage of the river became free, and abundance of provisions poured into Paris.

The king now changed his tactics, for the capture of the metropolis was more remote than ever. He divided his army into several detachments, for the security of the provinces, and only kept near his person some flying squadrons of cavalry, to prevent the Duke of Parma making any further progress. The Spanish general, at the urgent entreaty of Mayenne, laid siege to Corbeil, to free the passage of the Seine, as he had done that of the Marne. It was bravely defended by Rigaut, the governor, but he being slain, the place was carried by assault, on the 16th of October, 1590, and sacked. During this siege the Duke of Parma's soldiers, wanting provisions, had plundered the surrounding country, which disgusted the French of the league, and gave rise to mutual recrimination

between them and their allies. Nor was this the only cause of distrust and bad feeling. The Duke of Parma wished to garrison Corbeil with his own troops; to this Mayenne objected. The Spanish commander then determined on marching back to Flanders, satisfied with the relief of Paris. He arranged his army in four divisions, each of which was flanked with carriages on all sides, as with a rampart, and yet they were so near to each other, as to afford ready assistance, if any one of them was attacked. Henry followed him in his retreat, but gained no advantage over his experienced and cautious rival. The Baron De Givry recaptured Lagny and Corbeil, and with these events the campaign of 1590 closed.¹

Though the retreat of the Duke of Parma relieved the king from a formidable enemy, the resistance of the league was unabated; and what perplexed him more, was the dread of seeing France dismembered and carved out into principalities. Emanuel of Lorraine, Duke of Mercœur, pretending that the duchy of Brittany, of which he was governor for the league, belonged to his wife, Mary of Lux-

¹ Henry IV., says Mathieu, when in pursuit of the Duke of Parma, stole away from Attichy, and went, for the first time, to visit the beautiful Gabrielle at Cœuvres. He contented himself with eating some bread-and-butter at the gate, that he might not raise the suspicions of her father. Afterwards, mounting his horse, he said that he was going towards the enemy, and that the fair one should soon hear what he had performed through his passion for her. (Tom. ii., p. 59.) The beautiful Gabrielle was daughter of John Antony D'Étreés and Frances Babou de la Bourdaisiere. She bore, successively, the names of the fair Gabrielle, Madame de Liancourt, Marchioness of Monceaux, and Duchess of Beaufort.

embourg, Countess of Penthievre, and holding, by virtue of his command, the principal towns and castles in his possession, now resolved to establish an independent sovereignty in the province. Henry of Bourbon, Prince of Dombes, son of the Duke of Montpensier, had been appointed Governor of Brittany by the king; but, though remarkable for personal courage, he was unable to cope with Mercœur, and would have been completely driven out of the province, had he not been supported by the troops of Lower Normandy. The young prince, however, having taken Annebot, near to Blavet, there constructed a fort on the margin of the sea, so as to command the entrance of the harbour; but a Spanish fleet of six-and-thirty ships entered it, in spite of the cannon of Fort Dombes, and the prince was compelled to retire. In Provence the king was equally unfortunate, the Duke of Savoy having possessed himself of Aix, the principal city of that department, though this was done in opposition to the views of Mayenne. The king, however, closed the year 1590 with the capture of Corby, a town on the river Somme, by which he was enabled to hold Amiens in check.

The firm and fearless mind of Henry IV. braved the Spaniards, the league, and those French nobles who sought to dismember the kingdom: before these accumulated difficulties his courage quailed not; but he was extremely embarrassed how to act, to retain the confidence of the Catholics. Since the autumn of 1589, he had promised to convene an assembly in which he might be instructed in the doctrines of the Church of Rome: he had excused himself for not

having redeemed that pledge, in consequence of the war, the battle of Ivry, and the siege of Paris. The patience of the Roman Catholics had now become exhausted, and Bordeaux sent its first-president and two counsellors to beseech his majesty to make a final resolution. Henry was compelled to steer a middle course: to displease the Roman Catholics was tantamount to exclusion from the throne; to break with the Calvinists, who had befriended him in adversity, would have been an act of the blackest ingratitude; moreover, in the actual state of his affairs, it would have been impolitic, as the king required money and troops from Elizabeth of England, and the Protestant princes of Germany. These matters he represented to the leaders of the Roman Catholic party, and they felt their force: to conciliate them, he appointed the Duke of Nevers, who had abandoned the league, Governor of Champagne; the Baron Biron, son of the marshal, high-admiral; and recalled the Duke of Epernon.

Having succeeded by these means in postponing his confession of faith, the king despatched the Viscount of Turenne to England, who prevailed on the queen to advance one hundred thousand crowns, and send six thousand men into Brittany, to strengthen the Prince of Dombes against the Duke of Mercœur and the Spaniards. This negotiation being concluded, he proceeded to Germany, and there raised four thousand horse and eight thousand foot, with artillery and ammunition, who were to march to the aid of Henry, under the command of Christiern, Prince of Anhalt.

While Henry IV. was thus quieting discontent at home, and preparing to draw succour from abroad, Mayenne began to experience the difficulties which always beset the leader of a party. Many of the princes and nobles, whose pretensions were equal to his own, continually demanded money of him to pay their soldiers, and he did not dare to refuse them, lest they should join the royalists. These burthens, of course, fell on the people, who murmured. The Spanish agents secretly inflamed popular dissatisfaction, complaining of the Duke's bad management, with a view to diminish his personal authority, and render him dependent on the court of Madrid. Mayenne was also embroiled with the Duke of Lorraine, who had grown jealous at the advancement of a younger branch of his family. He had also quarrelled with the Duke of Nemours, Governor of Paris, who had defended it bravely. Nemours claimed full power within its walls; this Mayenne disputed, and having of his own will and pleasure appointed the mayor and other magistrates, Nemours resigned his command in disgust, and retired to Lyons. The Duchess of Guise complained that her son was not ransomed from prison, and on that ground imputed blame to Mayenne, though the king had positively refused him his liberty on any terms. The duke was also at variance with Mercœur, for attempting to dismember the empire, and for holding a private correspondence with the Spaniards.

Such was the state of affairs at the commencement of 1591. The army of the league attacked

St. Denis, but was repulsed, and the commander, the Chevalier D'Aumale, was slain.¹ The king attempted to surprise Paris, but his stratagem was discovered and defeated. On the 16th of February he laid siege to Chartres, which resisted till the 19th of April, when it surrendered, principally through the skill and valour of Chatillon,² of whom Sully speaks in terms of the highest praise. On the other hand, Mayenne took Chateau Thierry.

The king having fixed his head-quarters at Mantes, convened his council, and the most eminent noblemen and gentlemen of his party, and stated to them, that in justice to the Huguenots, and as a mark of confidence to the Queen of England and the Protestant princes of Germany, he intended to revive the last edict of pacification granted by Henry III. in favour of Calvinism. There was but little opposition to this measure, for as Spain and Rome sent troops to the league, the royalists were compelled to seek foreign succour; and that succour would have been doubtful, and perhaps soon removed, had a disposition been shown of withholding concessions from the Huguenots. The Archbishop of Bourges, the

¹ Those who were curious observed that the chevalier fell dead before the door of an inn, the sign of which was the ROYAL SWORD; and they esteemed it a still greater prodigy, that upon being laid upon the bier, in the church of the friars of St. Denis, his body, on the following night, was gnawed and mangled by moles.—*Davila*, p. 490.

² Chatillon, Francis de Coligny, son of the famous admiral, and himself Admiral of Guienne. He died in the year of this siege, 1591, in his castle of Louve, at thirty years of age. The Calvinist party had a great loss in him, for it was believed, that if he had lived he would even have excelled his father.—*De Thou*.

Bishop of Nantes, and other Catholics, merely stipulated that this indulgence should be temporary, and subject to revision, when peace was proclaimed, and all the differences of religion finally accommodated. The Cardinal of Vêndome, however, pretended to be much scandalized at this proposal: he was nephew to the deceased Cardinal of Bourbon, and was secretly plotting to obtain the throne for himself, in the event of Henry not abjuring Calvinism. His plans were made known by the interception of letters he had written to the pope, praying his holiness to recognize him as king. Henry did not punish this treason as it deserved, but he nipped it in the bud, by bestowing titles and pensions on the advisers of the young cardinal, by whom he was then deserted.

Sixtus V. had been succeeded by Urban VII., who only reigned thirteen days. He was replaced by Gregory XIV., after long and stormy debates in the conclave. While these lasted, the Duke of Luxemburg, the royal ambassador at Rome, wrote a circular letter to each of the cardinals, exposing the intrigues of the Spanish council, and the arts they were employing to gain absolute controul over the league. "It is the work," said he, "of the old enemy of France, who makes a pretext of religion to tear the kingdom asunder, that he may the more easily invade it, when he has exhausted its means of defence by civil war. Almost all the French nobles and the principal magistrates are attached to the king: he has promised to receive instruction, and he will do so, if no misplaced severity frustrates the goodness of his intentions. Remember the fatal changes which in-

discreet zeal has made religion undergo in Germany and England, and dread the schism which must inevitably break out in France, if you attempt to force the Catholics to abandon the king." The Duke of Luxemburg wrote in the same terms to the new pope, immediately after his election, imploring him to suspend his judgment, till the French princes and nobles had fully explained to him the state of the country.

In spite of these remonstrances the intrigues of Spain and the league had already gained the mind of Gregory. Instead of waiting the arrival of the solemn embassy, prepared in France to visit Rome, he began to raise troops, and money for their pay, and gave the command of his little army, composed of twelve hundred Italian horse and two thousand foot, to which were adjoined four thousand Swiss mercenaries, to his nephew, the Duke of Montemarcano. At the same time he sent to France, in the capacity of legate, Marsilio Landriano, a Milanese prelate, who was a tool of the Spaniards, and fanatically attached to ultramontane maxims. Arrived at Rheims, the legate read the papal monitory addressed to the prelates, nobles, and magistrates, who followed the king's party: the clergy were expressly commanded, under pain of excommunication and the loss of their benefices, to withdraw from all places which recognized the rights of Henry of Bourbon; it then exhorted and admonished the nobility and people to pursue the same conduct, but the concluding paragraph converted the admonitions and exhortations into positive commands. This insulting monitory the nuncio had the imprudence to publish, though against

the advice of Mayenne and Villeroy. It was, however, accepted by the parliament of Paris. The king denounced Landriano, and cautioned his subjects against complying with a monitory which involved the integrity and privileges of the Gallican church. It was indignantly rejected by the parliaments of Tours and Chalons, who ordered it to be publicly burned ; and they passed a decree, declaring obedience to the pope, in this particular, high-treason. The estates of all who observed it were threatened with confiscation, and even the clergy protested that the canons of the church did not oblige them to abandon their flocks in such troubled times, but rather protect them in the hour of danger. With the exception of fanatics and bigots, who considered a papal mandate as binding on their consciences as a divine mission, every good Frenchman was disgusted at the audacity of the pontiff, and even Mayenne began to distrust the nuncio, who inclined openly to the cause of Spain.

While Rome was thus attacking Henry with spiritual arms, the king laid siege to Noyon, and captured it, while Lesdiguières, the royalist governor of Dauphiny, defeated the troops of the Duke of Savoy. The Duke of Montpensier was eminently successful in Normandy. At this time, Charles of Lorraine, son of Henry, Duke of Guise, assassinated at Blois, escaped from Tours, and his presence in the camp of the league added greatly to the embarrassment of Mayenne, for it raised up another pretender to the throne he was struggling to secure for himself.¹

¹ "The flight of the Duke of Guise will ruin the league," said Henry. The duke's *valet*, having found means to amuse

At this juncture Turenne joined the king with six thousand Germans, having the Prince of Anhalt at their head. Three thousand English, under the command of the Earl of Essex, landed at Boulogne, and were incorporated with the division of Marshal Biron. Count Philip of Nassau reinforced the royalists with a Dutch fleet of fifty sail, and two thousand five hundred soldiers. Henry was now in possession of an army of forty thousand men, with which he laid siege to Rouen, on the 1st of October, 1591. The city was commanded by the Marquis Villars, well known for his courage and capacity: he had shut himself up within the walls with the son of Mayenne, both resolved to bury themselves under the ruins rather than surrender.

Besiegers and besieged performed prodigies of valour, and the king exposed his person with a fearlessness that bordered on rashness. Villars rivalled him in heroism, and distinguished himself by frequent sallies from the town. Such was his admiration of Henry, that he openly exclaimed, "By heavens, this prince deserves a thousand crowns for his valour. I am sorry that, by a better religion, he does not inspire us with as strong an inclination to gain him new ones, as to detain from him his own; but it shall never be said that I have failed to attempt in my own person, what a great king has Rouvrai and the guards, either by play or drinking, let his master down from the highest window in the castle, in the middle of the day, with a rope, by which he afterwards descended himself. The duke got into a small boat, which carried him to the other side of the river, where two horses waited for him.—*Mathieu*, tom. ii. p. 81. *Cayet*, tom. ii. p. 465.

performed in his.”¹ In this siege the baron Biron, son of the marshal, and the brave Crillon, were severely wounded; Sir Walter Devereux, brother to the Earl of Essex, was slain; and the chivalrous Essex challenged Villars to single combat, who declined the offer on account of his superior rank.

No decisive advantage was gained, on either side, when, on the 14th of January, 1592, intelligence was received in the royalist camp that the Duke of Parma was marching to the relief of the beleaguered city. The king at once quitted Rouen with about ten thousand cavalry, leaving the rest of his army with Marshal Biron to prosecute the siege. Henry having imprudently advanced with only nine hundred horse, was met by the enemy at Aumale, on the confines of Picardy and Upper Normandy, and had not the Duke of Nevers come promptly to his assistance, he must have been slain or captured. He was wounded in this skirmish, the only wound he ever received in battle, and forced to retire to Dieppe, till his strength was restored. The Duke of Parma took up his quarters at Aumale on the following day, at which the French nobles of the league murmured, observing, that if he would advance, the war would be finished at a single blow; but the Duke answered, that what he had done he would do again under similar circumstances, because it had been dictated by reason, having till then believed that he was opposed to the captain-general of an army, and not to a mere captain of

¹ Sully, c. iv.

light-horse, which he now knew the King of Navarre to be.¹

The army of the league, advancing by slow marches, laid siege to Neufchâtel, which only made a short defence. They then drew nigh to Rouen. The king raised the siege after having lost three thousand men, and presenting himself in front of the Duke of Parma, offered him battle. The Spanish general affected to receive it with alacrity, but he extricated himself by a stratagem. Under cover of a front of infantry, he drew up his cavalry in order of battle, seeming to wait only to be attacked, but he sent all his horse and baggage through defiles in his rear, screened by hills and bushes: the front of infantry, which had no depth, following the same route, the whole army disappeared in twenty-four hours, to the astonishment and vexation of the king.

The relief of Rouen, effected with so much ease, and without a pitched battle, raised the hopes of the league; but though the siege was raised, the passage of the Seine down to the ocean was not free, Caudebec being in the hands of the royalists. To attack this town was the next operation resolved upon; and while the Duke of Parma was reconnoitring the fortifications, he was struck with a musket-ball in the arm, which entered at the elbow and passed down almost to the hand; three incisions were made before the ball was extracted, which

¹ Henry having sent to the Duke of Parma to ask his opinion of his retreat from Aumale, the duke replied, "that it was indeed a very fine one, but that, for his part, he never engaged in any place whence he was obliged to retire."

caused fever, and the general was confined to his bed. However, Caudebec surrendered to Mayenne.¹

Henry again brought his army into the field, consisting of eighteen thousand foot, and eight thousand horse. By the occupation of Caudebec the confederates were shut up in the peninsula of Caux, being enclosed towards the sea by Eu, Arques, and Dieppe, places strongly garrisoned, while the navigation of the Seine was still impeded by Quillebœuf and the Dutch fleet: all that Henry had now to do, was to secure the entrance towards the river Somme, which alone led from the peninsula into Normandy and Picardy. The two armies were within a quarter of a mile of each other. Henry made several attacks on the entrenched camp of the leaguers, in all of which he was successful: he cut off the supplies, and there was every prospect of his opponent's being compelled to capitulate; but the Duke of Parma extricated himself from his perilous position by a masterly and unexpected manœuvre. With infinite diligence he constructed a bridge of boats, and crossed the river with his whole army, ammunition, and baggage, in the night. He marched hurriedly on, reached St.

¹ During this siege the Catholics in the royal camp, attributing all their reverses to the heresy of the king, formed the design of disinterring the Huguenots, who had been buried indiscriminately with the Catholics, and leaving their carcasses a prey to the crows. Two circumstances hindered the execution of this project, as contrary to religion as to nature,—the difficulty of distinguishing the bodies, and fear lest the Protestants, who composed two-thirds of the army, should think their honour engaged to revenge upon the living Catholics an outrage which would have exceeded all others.—*Sully*.

Cloud in four days, passed Paris, and never slackened his pace till he reached Chateau Thierrin in Champagne, whence the road to Flanders was secure. The king, perceiving that the prize had escaped him, disbanded his forces, only retaining three thousand horse and six thousand foot, with which he pursued the enemy to the confines of Picardy and Champagne.

The retreat of the Duke of Parma highly displeased the league. He was bitterly reproached by Mayenne. The duke justified his conduct: he claimed for himself the honour of having twice defeated the king, and rescued from him the two principal cities of France. He praised the generosity of Spain, who had defrayed almost the whole expenses of the war, while the leaguers only sought to lay the foundations of their private fortunes: finally, he expressed his resolution to evacuate France and return to Flanders, lest the affairs of that country should fall into ruin through his absence among a people ungrateful for his services. He left behind him a body of Spanish troops under De Rosne, with orders that he was to obey the Duke of Mayenne, who at once assaulted and took Ponteau de Mer. Villars sallied out of Rouen and laid siege to Quillebœuf; but he was repulsed by Crillon. De Rosne took Epernay; Marshal Biron, in attempting to regain it was shot through the body by a cannon-ball, and died without uttering a word.¹ His son, the

¹ It is Davila who says he was shot through the body, p. 559. Brantome, in his panegyric of this marshal, says that the ball took off his head. He was almost as famous for his learning as his abilities in war. De Thou greatly regrets the loss of his com-

Baron de Biron, eager to avenge the death of his father, scaled the walls, when the town surrendered ; but he was severely wounded.

While the war was thus being prosecuted, the king was negociating with Rome, and Mayenne preparing to assemble the States-general to proceed to the election of a king. On this last point all the parties composing the league were agreed, and it had become necessary, in some shape or other, to meet this wish. The states accordingly were convened at Paris. Never was an assembly more tumultuous. The plans proposed, the debates that arose on them, the objections started, were characteristics of the various passions by which ambition, avarice, and intolerance were swayed ; they were contradictory, ridiculous, and absurd. The King of Spain, who proposed to marry his daughter to the sovereign who might be elected, offered large assistance in men and money. But he was not in a condition to fulfil his promises. There were no longer great captains in his service. The Duke of Parma was dead,¹ and Maurice of Nassau, who defended

mentaries. He commanded in chief in seven battles, and bore as many scars of the wounds he had received in them. He was god-father to Cardinal Richelieu, who was named after him. The city of Gontaut, in Agenois, gave its name to this family. His loss was severely felt, and Henry IV. wept for him as for a brother. The marshal was killed on the 26th July, 1592, in the sixty-fifth year of his age.

¹ He died at Arras, in the abbey of St. Vaast. The Spaniards were accused of having poisoned him through jealousy ; but the wound he received in Normandy during the preceding year, joined to the malformation of his body, was the only cause of his death, and it was acknowledged when he was opened. His body was carried through Lorraine to Italy, attended by one hun-

the liberty of the United Provinces, made a diversion favourable to Henry. Moreover, Philip, by proposing to marry his daughter to the king whom the states might elect, made an enemy of Mayenne, for he, being married, would have been excluded from the throne.

However, had the states selected a king sanctioned by the pope and supported by Philip, Henry would have been placed in a most critical position. The people might have accepted a chief so nominated, in the hope of securing tranquillity. Such a sovereign would have possessed all the outward signs of legitimacy, except hereditary descent; and that deficiency would have been counterbalanced by a national vote, blessed and hallowed by the supreme pontiff. He would have been formidable; at least his election would have protracted the war. It was, however, difficult for so many leaders, who wished to parcel out the kingdom among themselves, to agree on the choice of a master; had they nominated one, it would have been equally difficult for him to satisfy the claims of rival nobles. These conflicting interests proved highly favourable to Henry, for they destroyed all unity of action among his enemies.

In this confused state of things, Henry only desired to gain time to execute a project he had long meditated, the object of which was to tranquillize

dred and sixty horse, caparisoned in black. He was only forty eight years of age. He complained of having been twice poisoned by the Spaniards, if we may believe D'Aubigné, who declares that the Italians were so fully persuaded of it, that from that time they never could endure the Spaniards.

France. To embarrass the deliberations of the States with new obstacles was his policy, and with this view he invited them to send deputies to confer with him. This proposition was made to the states by the Roman Catholic nobles attached to the royal cause, and though vehemently opposed by the Spanish ambassador, the legate, and the fanatics, it was accepted, for Mayenne saw clearly that it would disconcert the views of Philip, and leave a chance still open for himself. Surenne was fixed upon as the place of conference.

While these negotiations were being carried on, Sully intercepted a correspondence between Mayenne and Philip, which strongly influenced the conduct of the king. These documents possess great historical interest, as they throw light on Mayenne's designs, the spirit of the league, and the politics of Spain. The following is the substance of these dispatches.

The Duke of Mayenne proposed to subject the league to the pope, and put it under the King of Spain's protection, on certain conditions, which regarded the party in general, and himself in particular. It was stipulated by Mayenne, that the King of Spain should furnish and maintain in the service of the league, an army of sixteen thousand foot, and three thousand horse; in which army there should be two thousand five hundred foot, and five hundred troopers, all French, of whom the Duke of Mayenne was to have the sole disposal; that the number of these troops should be augmented, as occasion required; that Mayenne should have the chief command, with the title of Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, till a king of France was elected;

that this election should be made at a general conference, by which the states-general were intended ; that till this election was made and confirmed, the pension which Spain already paid to the general should be increased one half more, besides one hundred thousand crowns to be paid immediately, and one hundred thousand livres after the ratification of the treaty, in expectation of which they should begin by putting him (Mayenne) into actual possession of Burgundy ; that after the nomination of the future king, the duke should be continued in the government of the state, with the title of Lieutenant-General ; that then, and not before, he should yield up the city of Soissons to the Spaniards, because it was at present the only place of security he held for himself in France ; that if he found insurmountable objections, either in the election of a future king, probably from the King of Navarre, or in the invasion or keeping of Burgundy, the King of Spain should make the duke amends by an annual pension of three hundred thousand livres, for the possessions he might lose in France, which pension should never be lessened or taken away, whatever agreement might be made between the King of Spain and the acknowledged King of France, but be continued to his heirs for ever ; that Spain should cancel all the Duke of Mayenne's debts, or those of the king elected with the consent of that crown, if he was a native of France ; that suitable rewards should be given to other principal officers of the league ; these last were not specified, for Mayenne was less solicitous about the interests of others than his own, or he might have thought that this article

admitted of easy settlement, because, if money were wanting, the lords would be satisfied with pensions, dignities, or governments.

To these proposals the Archduke of Austria answered in the name of Philip, that the King of Spain was well pleased with the title of Defender of the League, and would consider himself as chief of the league; that he would always be ready to grant whatever supplies were demanded against the King of Navarre, and even more than might be demanded; that he would send into Picardy alone the nineteen thousand men already mentioned, (it is easy to see, with what design,—this province bordering the Low Countries,) besides those he might send into other parts of the kingdom. The archduke did not seem to be so much alarmed about Burgundy as the Duke of Mayenne, because the council of Spain had discovered that this general, having demanded the government of that province for himself, would have been glad to have employed all the troops in that quarter. Upon this article the archduke only granted wherewithal to raise a thousand German foot, and maintain three hundred horse. He added, however, that if the whole force of the war was turned against that province, his Catholic majesty would not refuse to send thither a considerable body of troops; and, without doubt, in this particular he would have kept his word. As to what regarded Mayenne personally, Philip appeared less liberal. Of all the articles this was the most reduced. The king would make no addition to the monthly pension, and would only allow the exclusive command of the two thousand infantry and five hundred

troopers, so long as Mayenne was actually in the field. Upon all the other articles the archduke was silent. But he insisted on the immediate surrender of Soissons, as a preliminary to the whole contract, and as a security for the advances already made.

These documents also alluded to third parties whose names were written in a disguised character ; but, after much laborious investigation, they were discovered to be the Abbé de Bellozanne, the two Durets, and the Abbé du Perron, all dependents on the Count of Soissons and the Cardinal of Bourbon, and particularly attached to the latter. This third party called themselves "THE POLITICALS," professing to stand neuter between the royalists and the leaguers, and valuing themselves on being too good Frenchmen to suffer the dominion of the Spaniards, and too zealous for the Romish religion to receive a Protestant king. Their principal object was to exclude every foreign prince, the King of Navarre as a heretic, and the Duke of Mayenne as unconnected with the blood royal. Sully positively declares that they intended to get rid of the two latter by the sword or poison, after which they anticipated no difficulty in making the Cardinal of Bourbon king, and not entirely to disoblige Spain, they proposed to obtain a papal dispensation, and marry him to the *infanta*.¹

The detection of this treason among the members of his own family, sensibly affected the king. He scarcely knew on whom he could depend. The Catholic royalists, restless and uneasy at the post-

¹ Sully, c. v.

ponement of his recantation, exhibited symptoms of throwing off their allegiance. The Huguenots dreaded lest he should abandon them, and became sullen and discontented. The king recollected the dying warning of Henry III., that he would never be sovereign of France, unless he reconciled himself to the church; nor was he unmindful of the advice of the brave La Noue, himself a sincere Protestant. Under these circumstances he opened his mind to Sully, confiding to that faithful friend his destiny and his crown. He advised his royal master to recant, and by that step baffle the league and Spain. Henry resolved to follow his recommendation.

The conference was now sitting at Surenne. The Archbishop of Bourges presented himself as envoy from the king; the Archbishop of Lyons was the orator of the league. Passports and safe conducts had been given on both sides. A truce was published on the 3rd of May, 1593, to extend four leagues round Paris, and the same distance round Surenne: this single circumstance so delighted the Parisians, who had been for several years imprisoned within their walls, that it contributed greatly to kindle a desire for permanent peace among the great majority of the inhabitants. In fact, both parties were agreed on one point, that peace was necessary to raise France from her present miseries and avert future ruin; but they disputed as to the mode of accomplishing their object. The deputies of the league held, that religion was the basis of all government, and therefore exhorted the royalists to abandon a heretic prince, and obey one approved of by the pope. On the other hand, it was contended that

the foundation of government was the acknowledgment of a lawful prince, a Frenchman by birth, whose claims were founded on the law of the land; they insisted that religion was a secondary consideration, for Christians had anciently obeyed many princes who were not only heretics, but schismatics, and also enemies and persecutors of the church, and that the most holy and most learned of the fathers of Christendom, nay even the apostles, had taught and sanctioned that obedience. This last doctrine the Bishop of Lyons most energetically denounced; in reply, the Archbishop of Bourges cited the text of St. Paul. Many sittings were spent in disputes of this character, in which the most remarkable propositions were, whether the church was in the state, or the state in the church,—whether a good Catholic could conscientiously obey a heretic,—and whether power, not approved of by the vicar of Jesus on earth, was legitimate. Each party of course claimed the victory, and neither were satisfied.

The Spanish agents profited by this disunion of sentiment to carry into effect their own policy. They began to scoff at the conference as incapable of arriving at any result. It was, therefore, arranged that a private meeting should be held at the legate's palace, to which the royalists were not to be admitted, and it took place on the 19th of May. There the Duke of Feria, ambassador from Madrid, proposed the Infanta Clara Eugenia Isabella, daughter to his most Catholic majesty, as queen, arguing that the crown justly belonged to her, she being born of

Elizabeth, eldest daughter to Henry II., King of France. He extolled her virtues; engaged that the whole power of Spain should be used to put her into possession of the throne; promised the Princes of Lorraine especially, and all the other lords and gentlemen of the party, the most ample gratifications; guaranteed the restoration of the church to its ancient splendour, and bound himself to reduce taxation and alleviate the burthens of the people.

The Bishop of Senlis, though a bitter enemy to Henry IV., replied to the Duke of Feria by a most scornful and indignant speech. He said the **POLITICALS** were in the right, who had ever contended that the true interests of the state were sacrificed to an assumed zeal for religion; that ambition moved the minds of men more than piety; and he expressed his grief at hearing that doctrine, against which he had himself frequently preached, now openly avowed by the ambassador; that thenceforward he should consider the Spaniards as wily as the Navarrais; but he prayed them, for their own honour and the reputation of the holy union, to abandon the principles that had been propounded; that for twelve hundred years, the kingdom of France had been ruled by men, according to the institutions of the Salic law; that it was not fitting now to transfer it to a woman, and thus subject the nation to the dominion of foreigners. This burst of patriotism, from one of the most furious of the leaguers, not only dismayed the Spaniards, but alarmed the whole assembly. Mayenne attempted an apology, excusing the bishop on account of the

vehemence of his temper, but his speech told, and lowered the credit of Madrid.¹

On the 26th of the month, the Spaniards made another attempt to carry their point. Having demanded and obtained a public audience in the states, Juan Baptista Taxis proposed the infanta as queen, and was supported in a long speech by Inigo Mendoza, in which he stated to the assembly, that though the crown belonged of right to the princess, yet she had condescended to accept it from them by election. The terms in which the proposition was worded, excited murmurs and general indignation; it was remarked that if females could inherit the throne, the kings of England had a preferable title to those of Spain, they being the *first* descended from daughters of France, and that the claims made by England in former times had caused tedious and sanguinary wars to sustain the Salic law. The deputies, however, did not dare openly to break with Spain: they asked, in the event of the infanta being

¹ ROZE, Bishop of Senlis, was the panegyrist of the assassin of Henry III. He was, however, (his prejudices aside,) a man of merit, an eloquent preacher, a profound theologian, Rector of the University of Paris, Grand-master of Navarre, and the esteemed confidant of the courts of Rome and Spain; his enemies have never reproached him with more than fanaticism, a crying evil indeed, which he pushed to excess. On signing the league, after his name he wrote these words: "*Utinam qui præit sacramento, antecedit martyrio.*" However, his furious zeal made but few proselytes at Senlis; the inhabitants always remained faithful to Henry III., in opposition to their bishop. In 1589 they sustained a sanguinary siege against the leaguers of Paris, and their town was perhaps the first in the kingdom to recognize Henry IV., by a solemn deputation sent on the second day of his reign.

elected, who was to be her husband ; Mendoza answered, Ernest, Archduke of Austria, the emperor's brother. This proposition was instantly and unanimously rejected ; the whole assembly declared that they would never acknowledge a king who was not a native of France. The Spanish negociators then waived this point, and pledged themselves that the princess should marry a French nobleman, to be named and elected king within six months.

Henry IV. was soon apprised of this scheme, and sought by every means in his power to frustrate the designs of the states through the conference of Surenne. The last proposal of the Spaniards had rendered his position more critical than ever, for each of the Roman Catholic royalists, thinking himself the most eligible husband for the infanta, began to swerve from his allegiance, to gain favour with the Duke of Feria and Mendoza. Even the members of the royal family were tempted by the golden bait, especially the Cardinal of Bourbon, the Count of Soissons, the Prince of Conti, and the Duke of Montpensier. Under these circumstances, Henry determined at once to recant, and the Archbishop of Bourges stated to the conference that the king, touched by divine inspiration, had acknowledged his errors, and would, in a few days, publicly enter into the bosom of the church. This declaration embarrassed the deputies of the league, and the Archbishop of Lyons, fearing lest it might disunite the confederates, promptly answered, that he would sincerely rejoice if the king's conversion were real and not simulated ; but whether it were sincere or pretended, he insisted that the deputies could not

act upon it, as the matter belonged exclusively to the papal jurisdiction ; therefore he contended that the king must be deemed a relapsed heretic until he had received absolution from the pope. The Archbishop of Bourges, without attempting to controvert this principle, presented a written document to the conference, which contained these three proposals : first, a notice of the king's conversion ; secondly, terms for the immediate settlement of religion, to be carried into effect, if approved of, after his public recantation ; thirdly, a cessation of arms, till the answer of the pope had been received. The deputies were disposed to accept these propositions, but the Spanish agents protested against them ; they at once pledged themselves that the infanta should marry one of the princes of Lorraine, and pressed for her immediate election. To this the leaguers demurred, for if she were once elected, she might refuse the husband proposed, and espouse a member of the house of Austria, or even a Spaniard. The Duke of Mayenne also opposed it, he being a married man, and thus excluded from the throne, and he knew that his sons would not have been preferred to the elder branches of his family. It was ultimately resolved, after many debates, not to accept the king's proposals, till he had received absolution from the pope.

Henry now determined to try the effect of a renewal of hostilities, and laid siege to Dreux, a town about sixteen leagues from Paris, on the 7th of June, 1593. On the 8th of July it surrendered. This conquest dismayed the leaguers. The Spanish envoys, finding that matters were proceeding to ex-

tremities, now offered the infanta to the young Duke of Guise. Mayenne was confounded, and expressed his doubts of their authority to make such a proposal; they produced the signature of Philip. The lieutenant-general then saw that all his schemes of ambition were dashed to the ground. Jealous of his nephew, he used every argument to fill him with distrust, and prevailed on him to stipulate that he should be elected king at the same time that the infanta was elected queen; that the election should be kept secret till the marriage was consummated; that in case the infanta died first, the Duke of Guise should remain king, and govern the kingdom alone; that if she were left a widow, she should be obliged to take a husband from the house of Lorraine; that, if she had no issue, the eldest of the Duke of Guise's brothers should succeed.¹ Many other clauses were added, guaranteeing power and emolument to Mayenne and his family.

The lieutenant-general hoped that the very extravagance of his demands would cause their rejection; but he was mistaken. The Spaniards most readily granted all he asked, for, the election of the infanta once secured, they intended to contrive various excuses to evade their engagements. Mayenne, thus again disconcerted, intrigued in favour of the Cardinal of Bourbon. He pointed out to the deputies the danger of violating the Salic law, spoke slightly of the present power of Spain, drained of its resources by the war in Flanders, and argued that all the royalist Catholics would support the Car-

¹ Davila, p. 610.

dinal, of whom the pope dare not disapprove. These arguments prevailed, for the people were warmly attached to the Salic institutions. This plan, however, Mayenne had no sooner formed, than he entirely changed his policy, and determined to convene the parliament. The president Le Maistre, a man of good intentions, and who had only followed the league from religious motives, fearing that the kingdom might fall into the hands of foreigners, caused the following decree to be published.

“ Upon the propositions already made to the court of parliament by the PROCUREUR-GENERAL, and the business taken into consideration at the meeting of the counsellors of the several courts, the said parliament not having, as it never had, any other intention than to maintain the Roman Catholic Apostolic religion, and the state and crown of France under the protection of a most Christian Catholic French king, has ordered, and hereby does order, that this day, after dinner, the president Le Maistre, accompanied by a good number of the counsellors of this parliament, shall make remonstrance to my lord, the Duke of Mayenne, Lieutenant-General of the state and crown of France, in presence of the princes and officers of the crown, who at this present moment are in this city, that no treaty ought to be made for transferring the crown into the hands of foreign princes or princesses; that the fundamental laws of the kingdom ought to be observed, and the decrees made by the parliament about declaring a Catholic French king be executed; that the said Duke of Mayenne ought to use the authority that has been given to him, to hinder the crown from

being, under pretext of religion, transferred into the hands of foreigners, against the laws of the kingdom : moreover, that he ought to provide, as soon as may be, for the repose of the people, on account of the extreme necessities to which they are reduced ; and in the mean time the said parliament has declared, and hereby does declare, all treaties now made, or which for the future may be made, for the establishment of any foreign prince or princess whatsoever, invalid, and of no force or effect whatsoever, as being in contravention of the Salic law, and the other fundamental laws of the kingdom.”¹

Of this decree Mayenne feigned disapprobation, though he was indeed the author of it ; it humbled the pretensions of Spain. The Parisians, fatigued with their long sufferings, eagerly desired a truce, as the precursor of a general peace, and so decided a moral change had been effected in public opinion, that the Spanish ambassadors were openly insulted, with shouts of derision when they appeared in the streets. All parties were now inclined to submit the differences of the kingdom to the conference of Surenne, and the recantation of the king was eagerly expected. The crisis was at hand, when he was absolutely compelled to submit to the church or forfeit the throne ; for the Catholic royalists felt, that while the strength of their own sect was being daily exhausted, France must ultimately be sacrificed to the heresy of the Huguenots, or the ambition of Spain. The Duke of Montpensier told Henry that all the princes were ready to forsake him, and that

¹ Davila, p. 611.

he must do so himself, though with poignant sorrow, but that he could not belie his conscience or peril his soul. The Count of Schomberg, secretly advised by Villeroy, stated to the king that Admiral Villars was then on his road to the Cardinal of Bourbon, with an offer of the crown. The secretary Revol confirmed this intelligence, and pointed out, in forcible terms, that of two results one must inevitably follow; either that the cardinal being elected king all the Catholics would follow him; or, that the infanta being chosen with the Duke of Guise, the full strength of Spain would be exerted for his destruction. These arguments determined Henry no longer to delay the execution of the plan he had resolved upon: he invited several Roman Catholic divines to attend him at Mantes, and give him religious instruction: it was soon afterwards announced that he would go to mass at Saint Denis on the 25th of July, 1593.

This determination was announced to the conference of Surenne by the Archbishop of Bourges; but the Archbishop of Lyons, persisting in his opposition, denied the right of the deputies to acknowledge the king till he had received absolution from the pope. The cardinal-legate addressed letters monitory to all the priests of France, threatening them with excommunication and privation of their benefices, if they accepted the pretended conversion of the BEARNOIS, as he called the king, or attended the ceremony of his recantation. But these menaces were vain; the obstacle of religion removed, all were willing to acknowledge Henry IV. except Mayenne and his personal friends and adherents; and

even the Duke of Guise told the Spanish envoys that his election would now prove ridiculous and dangerous.

On the day appointed, the king, entirely clothed in white, arrived at the Cathedral of Saint Denis, the gates of which were closed. On the high chancellor knocking, they were opened, when the Archbishop of Bourges, sitting in his archiepiscopal chair, and arrayed in his pontifical habit, asked the king, who he was and what he required. His majesty answered, that he was Henry, King of France and Navarre, and that he demanded to be received into the bosom of the Roman Catholic church. On this the prelate inquired if he desired it from the bottom of his heart, and had truly repented of his former errors. Having said these words, the king protested on his knees, that he had truly repented of his former errors, which he abjured and detested, and that he would live and die a Catholic in the Apostolic Roman church, which he would protect and defend at the hazard of his life. He then repeated the profession of faith, was introduced into the church amidst salvos of artillery, made confession in private to the archbishop, then took his seat under the dais, or cloth of state, and heard the mass celebrated by the Bishop of Nantes. The ceremony being completed, the king returned to his palace, followed by an immense concourse of people, who rent the air with shouts of *Vive le Roi*.

The Jesuits, frantic with rage at the conversion of the king, and fearing that he might succeed in securing the throne, resolved on his assassination, and they found an instrument of their vengeance in Bar-

rière, a native of Orleans, who followed the vocation of a waterman in the boats that trafficked on the Loire. "Barrière," says De Thou, "had been formerly sent by the Duke of Guise to deliver Margaret, Queen of Navarre, while she was kept prisoner by Marc de Beaufort, Marquis of Canillac, in whose custody she had been placed by the king. Having fulfilled his mission, he fell in love with a girl who was a confidential servant of the queen's : but having lost all hope of marrying her, he gave himself up to despair. Wishing only for death, he resolved to kill the king, an act which he was secretly told would be acceptable to God, and meritorious in the eyes of men. With this design he passed from Auvergne to Lyons, and there spoke of his project to one of the grand-vicars of the archbishop, who was a Carmelite, next to a Capuchin, and lastly to a Dominican, a spy of Ferdinand, Grand-duke of Tuscany, to learn from them the intentions of the leaguers. The Dominican said, he would reflect upon the subject, and having told Barrière to call upon him the next day, he warned one of the gentlemen attached to the suite of Queen Louisa, widow of the deceased king, named Brancaleon, whose attachment to Henry IV. he knew, to visit him at an appointed hour that he might see the assassin, and be able to identify him wherever he might meet him. On the next day, Seraphim Barchy, such was the name of the Dominican, received them both at his house, and after having given an ambiguous answer to the wretch, who was rushing headlong to his ruin, dismissed him ; he then disclosed to Brancaleon the purport of Barrière's visit,

and exhorted him forthwith to set out for the army, whither the assassin was going, and anticipate the execrable design, by denouncing the villain to justice. Brancaleon instantly repaired to Nevers. There, fearing to be arrested on his journey, for though a truce had been proposed, it was not yet concluded or published, he drew a painting of the man he had seen, and having given it to a friend who was proceeding to join the king by a different route, he himself took the route to Melun. The Duke of Nevers promised to pay his ransom if taken.

“ So much time was lost that Barrière had leisure to walk from Lyons to Paris. He first went to Christopher Aubry, curate of Saint André-des-Arcs, a native of Eu, a town belonging to Henrietta of Clèves, widow of the late Duke of Guise, and for that reason the more attached to the league. He declared to him his project, saying that some scruples had arisen in his mind since he had heard of the conversion of the King of Navarre, and asked the curate if he ought to persist in his design. The seditious priest encouraged and strengthened the original plan, declaring that the conversion of the king was feigned and simulated ; he persuaded him that the only means of securing religion was to kill the Bearnois ; he praised his zeal in so holy a cause, and to fortify his resolution, took him to the house of Varade, rector of the Jesuits. Varade removed every lingering scruple, by repeating the arguments of the curate, and caused another Jesuit, ignorant of the affair, to confess him. Barrière, thus excited, purchased a knife, which he so sharpened that it would cut on either side.

“ The assassin went to Saint Denis, where the king then was, and met him as he was coming out of the church, after having heard mass, surrounded by a dense crowd. Although very near to the royal person, a secret horror withheld his arm. From Saint Denis he followed the king to Gournay, Crecy, Champ-sur-Marne, and Brie-Comte-Robert, where he again confessed to a priest, and finally to Melun, where he had many opportunities of committing the murder, of which he did not avail himself. At length Brancaleon arrived, and caused him to be arrested by the officers of the sheriff. Brancaleon was confronted with Barrière, who, remembering to have seen his accuser at the house of the Dominican at Lyons, admitted at once that he had intended to assassinate the king, but having heard, since that resolution was first formed, that his majesty had returned into the bosom of the church, he had abandoned his project, and being disgusted with life, for the reasons already assigned, he now wished to retire among the capuchins; that he came to Paris with that intention, but being sent back to Orleans, the place of his birth, he had stopped on his road at Saint Denis, to receive money and letters of recommendation to Francis Balzac d'Entragues, formerly governor of Orleans. Such was his statement, which he delivered with great confidence, and an air of perfect security. When he was shown the double-edged knife, which was found on his person, he swore that he only used it to cut bread and meat for his meals. He poured forth a torrent of abuse against the heretics and the judges named by the king, and declared that he was ready to undergo

the most excruciating death ordered by those *hangmen*, for so he styled them. No one doubted that he really had intended to murder the king, and that he would have executed that intention, had not Providence interposed. He was unanimously condemned to death by his judges, who sentenced him to the torture, that he might disclose the names of his accomplices and instigators.

“ His punishment was postponed to the following day, the government wishing to apprehend the priest who had confessed and absolved him at Brie-Comte-Robert. During this interval, persons ignorant of the sentence that had been pronounced, represented to him the enormity of the crime, and pointed out that those who contemplated the assassination of princes, exposed themselves to eternal damnation. The Dominican, Oliver Bérenger, who had followed the king’s party throughout the war, made Barrière feel all the heinousness of his guilt. When put to the torture, the conduct of this wretch was totally changed from what it had been when he stood before his judges ; and on hearing his sentence pronounced, he requested that the cords which bound him should be loosened, exclaiming aloud that he recognized his guilt,—that he was happy in not having executed his detestable project,—and was gratified in having fallen into the hands of his judges, whose decision, in depriving him of temporal life, had prevented his losing one infinitely more precious ; then, raising his eyes to heaven, he vowed his detestation of his crime and of those who had counselled it, and perilled the salvation of his soul, by assuring him *that if he died in the enterprize, his soul lifted up by an-*

gels, would fly into the bosom of God, where it would enjoy eternal beatitude. He further said, that he had been warned, if seized in the attempt, not to name any of those who had instigated him to regicide, otherwise he would be sure of eternal damnation. Barrière underwent capital punishment, but the Jesuit Varade and the curate Audry, who were at Paris with the leaguers, remained unpunished."

A truce of three months was at last agreed upon, to commence from the 1st of August, 1593. The king required a suspension of arms, that he might the more conveniently negociate with Rome; it was essential to Mayenne that he might make fresh arrangements with Spain; it was most acceptable to the people, especially at that season of the year, when the harvest was ripe. Thus all, from various motives, assented to the armistice. The Duke of Nevers was sent as ambassador from the king to the pope to solicit his absolution; Mayenne dispatched the Sieur de Montpezat to Philip, asking the hand of the infanta for his eldest son. Neither of these embassies were successful: the pope refused to recognize Henry IV., wishing to give the crown to a Catholic prince of the house of Bourbon, and marry him to the infanta: the court of Madrid persisted in their scheme of uniting her to the Duke of Guise. His holiness even commanded the Duke of Nevers not to approach Rome, but he disobeyed the command, and prostrating himself on his knees, implored absolution for his master. His request was sternly rejected.

The truce of three months was now drawing to a close. Mayenne requested the king to prolong it,

but he refused, well aware that the duke was not awaiting the resolutions of Rome, as he pretended, but supplies of men and money from Spain. When the armistice expired, Vitry, Governor of Meaux, having vainly demanded the means of paying his troops from Fuentes, the Spanish commander in the Low Countries, surrendered the town to Henry, who granted it many privileges, and confirmed Vitry in its government. D'Estrumel, Governor of Peronne, Montdidier, and Roye, gave up those towns, and Villeroi yielded Pontoise. Marshal de la Chastre placed Orleans and Bourges in the hands of the king, who confirmed him in the military rank, bestowed on him by Mayenne. Lyons also declared for Henry, and the city of Aix, in Provence, pressed by the Duke of Epernon, and not relieved, submitted to the crown. These defections alarmed Mayenne, who began to waver in his resistance: he had applied to the pope for aid, who excused himself, saying that his resources were needed to defend Hungary against the Turks. Philip had given evasive promises of assistance, and the chiefs of the league felt that no dependence could be placed on the court of Madrid. Mayenne suspected the fidelity of Berlin, Governor of Paris, and dismissed him in defiance of the parliament, appointing as his successor the Count of Brissac. In this, however, he deceived himself, for Brissac at once used his influence to place the capital in the power of the king.

A short negociation effected this object. As the terms of submission it was stipulated that, in the city of Paris, its suburbs, and throughout a circuit of ten miles round them, no public service of religion

should be permitted, except that of the Roman Catholic, according to the edicts of all former kings ; that the king should grant a general pardon to all, of whatever state or condition, who by word or deed had upheld the league, excepting those who had traitorously conspired against his person, or had been accessory to the murder of Henry III. ; that the property and persons of the citizens should be guaranteed against violence or plunder, and all privileges and immunities be confirmed, as they were wont to be in preceding reigns ; that all places, offices, and benefices, into which the Duke of Mayenne had put men when vacancies by death occurred, either of his own will, or jointly with the parliament, should be continued to the same persons so appointed, but with an obligation to take new patents from the king ; that all the present magistrates of the city should retain their functions, if they took the oath of allegiance to his majesty ; that every citizen who would not remain, should have liberty to quit the city with his effects ; that the cardinal-legate, the Cardinal Pellevé, and all the prelates and their servants, should be allowed freely to stay or quit, according to their pleasure ; that the Spanish ambassadors should receive passports and free conducts, to go whither they pleased ; that the soldiers of the garrison, whether French or foreigners, should march out of the city armed, drums beating, colours flying, and matches lighted ; that two hundred thousand crowns should be paid to the Count of Brissac, as a compensation for his losses ; that he should receive an annual pension of twenty thousand francs, be confirmed in the rank of Marshal of France conferred

upon him by Mayenne, and be appointed to the government of Corbie and Mantes.¹

While the negociation for the surrender of Paris was progressing, Henry IV. was crowned at Chartres by Nicholas De Thou, bishop of that city, on the 27th of February, 1594. The twelve peers of France, six ecclesiastical and six temporal, were present by their representatives. The Bishops of Chartres, Nantes, Mans, Maillezays, Orleans, and Augiers, represented those of Rheims, Langues, Laon, Beauvais, Noyon, and Chalons; the representatives of the temporal peers were, the Prince of Conti for the Duke of Burgundy, the Count of Soissons for the Duke of Guienne, the Duke of Montpensier for the Duke of Normandy, the Duke of Luxemburg for the Earl of Flanders, the Duke of Retz for the Count of Toulouse, and the Duke of Ventadour for the Count of Champagne. The ambassadors of England and Venice were present; when the king came out of church, he touched three hundred persons for the evil.²

¹ Davila, p. 634.

² Two difficulties arose before the coronation took place. Rheims was the city in which this ceremony was usually performed, but it was in the possession of the league; it was, however, ascertained that in ancient times kings had been crowned in other places. The second objection related to the holy oil, brought down by an angel from heaven, for the consecration of Clovis, and preserved at Rheims. After some inquiry it was discovered that there was another bottle of oil at Tours, in the monastery of the friars of Saint Martin, which also had been brought down from heaven to anoint that saint, when he fell down from a ladder and broke all his bones. This bottle was brought to Chartres under an escort of four troops of horse, and its contents were used to consecrate Henry IV.—*Davila*, p. 634.

On the 27th of March, 1594, Brissac opened the gates of Paris to the king, who traversed the city amidst shouts of *Vive le Roi*. A Spanish battalion alone resisted, but was speedily vanquished. The Bastille submitted after a siege of five days. The legate and the Spanish ambassadors quitted the city. Parliament annulled all the decrees and ordinances passed since 1588, the year in which Henry III. was assassinated. The members of the university took the oaths of fidelity and allegiance. Their example was followed by the curates of Paris; the Jesuits obstinately refused obedience, though the form of oath demanded of them was extremely moderate. It was worded in the following terms: "I promise and swear to live and die in the Catholic Apostolic, and Roman faith, under the rule of Henry IV., the most Christian and Catholic King of France and Navarre. I renounce all leagues and assemblies formed against his service, and I will not undertake any thing against his authority."

A resistance so impolitic on the part of the Jesuits, only increased the storm gathering over their heads. They had shown themselves so openly the enemies of the king and state, and persisted so daringly in their rebellion, that it was difficult to believe they would omit any opportunity of assailing the life of the sovereign. These considerations decided the university, some days after the king's entrance into the capital, to publish a decree, by which they cited the Jesuits before the courts of justice, with a view to their total expulsion from the country. The affair was brought before the parliament. The curates of Paris intervened in favour of the

university. The petition presented to the parliament narrated in detail all the crimes imputed to the Jesuits from their first establishment in France; the university observed that, from that period they had never ceased to demand the banishment of the new sect, especially during the late troubles, "the Jesuits having been the tools of the Spanish faction, aiming at the dismemberment of the state, conspiring against the life of the king, and violating all order, political and hierarchical." The petition prayed for their expulsion from the whole of France, and bore the signature of James Amboise, rector of the university. This Amboise was the physician of Henry IV.

The cause was pleaded on the 12th, 13th, and 16th of July, 1594. The famous advocate, Antony Arnauld, pleading for the university, pronounced a memorable oration, from which the following passages are extracted, as specimens of his style and argument.

"Was it not among the Jesuits," exclaimed Arnauld, "that the ambassadors and agents of the King of Spain held their most secret meetings? was it not among them that *Louchard*, *Ameline*, *Crucé-Crome*, and other murderers, hatched their diabolical conspiracies? was it not among them that, in 1590, it was resolved that nine-tenths of the population should starve with hunger, rather than the city should be surrendered to the king? Who was president of the council of Sixteen, but the Jesuit *Pigenat*, the most ferocious tiger in Paris, who was so heart-broken at the bad success of the league that he became insane through vexation?"

“ Was it not in the college of Lyons and that of Paris, in the month of August, 1593, that the last resolution to assassinate the king was formed? Does not the deposition of Barrière, executed at Melun, prove it? and has not the fact struck terror into every true French heart? Was it not the Jesuit Varade who assured the murderer that he could not perform a more meritorious act, and, to confirm him in his resolution, caused him to be confessed and absolved by another Jesuit whose name has not transpired? Did not these impious and execrable assassins employ the most holy, the most solemn, the most sacred mysteries of the Christian religion, to massacre the first king in Christendom?

“ I confess that a just indignation transports me beyond the bounds of forensic calmness, when I see that these traitors, villains, murderers, confessors and absolvers of regicide, are still among us, that they live in France and breathe its air. What do I say? Not only do they live among us, but they enter our palaces; they are countenanced, they are caressed; they form leagues, factions, alliances, and confederacies.

“ The humiliation of these brethren in the affair of Cardinal Borromeo is quite recent. One of them wished to assassinate that cardinal. Their order was at once extinguished, and they were expelled from Italy by Pope Pius V. And yet the Jesuits, who have attempted to murder the King of France, are not banished! Is the life of a cardinal, then, more precious than that of the eldest son of the church? If this tribunal does not deliver us from these monsters,

they will perpetrate even more evil than they have yet accomplished !

“ I have ever before my eyes the assassin of Melun, and while the Jesuits, confessors of these assassins, remain in France, my mind will never know repose. When they are expelled, I shall have confidence, for then all the plots of Spain against my native land will prove harmless. All the brotherhoods, under the names of *Jesus*, *Cordon*, the *Virgin*, *Cappe*, *Chapelet*, *Petit Collet*, and others of a similar description, ought to be extinguished. Then the traitors who conspire against the state, would have no engine to promote their plans.

“ If the day of conservation is not less delightful than the day of birth, certainly the day on which the Jesuits shall be expelled from France, will be no less memorable than the foundation of our university ; and as Charlemagne, after having delivered Italy from the Lombards, Germany from the Hungarians, passed twice into Spain, subdued the Saxons, and founded our university, which, during eight hundred years, has been the most flourishing in the world, and has served as a refuge to men of letters banished from Italy, and persecuted in Greece, Egypt, and Africa,—in the same manner, Henry the Great, having expelled the Spaniards by force of arms and banished the Jesuits by your decree, will restore to our university its ancient splendour and primitive glory.

“ Consider, gentlemen, the point to which you have gone ; you have declared the Duke of Mayenne and his adherents guilty of high-treason. You

have snatched from them the city of Paris, which they thought was for ever subjected to their rule. Their only regret is that they could not put you all to death. Providence has this day placed it in your power to crush all their machinations, and they will consider the expulsion of the Jesuits from France as great a calamity as the loss of two battles. Do not lose so fine an opportunity of delivering us from men to whom literature only serves as an instrument of wickedness, as it did to Caracalla. Expel the miscreants, who excel all other villains in turpitude and crime.

“Should their advocate praise the magnanimity and clemency of the king, and appeal to those great qualities for their protection, remember that it is this very king, so magnanimous and clement, whose blood they daily pray for, and whose assassination is plotted in their detestable conclaves. Remember that, since the time of their founder Ignatius Loyola, they have endeavoured to deprive the Bourbons of a part of Navarre, and that they are now striving to strip the reigning monarch of the crown of France, which they desire to incorporate with Spain, as a dependency, in the same manner that they have done with Portugal.”

Then apostrophizing the king, Arnauld exclaimed, “It is weakness, it is folly, to tolerate these traitors, these assassins in the heart of your dominions. Your fame has spread over Europe, and has reached the most distant countries; your victories are the theme of general conversation; you have well earned the surname of the “Great,” and that title is already consecrated to immortality; your deeds of arms have

encircled your brows with laurels, and placed your enemies under your feet. But your majesty was not brought into this world solely to acquire glory ; and consider how much that glory will be stained, if posterity read in the history of your reign, that because you did not strangle these serpents, or drive them out of your kingdom, they ultimately destroyed you, and after you, all your poor subjects. If you are too generous to tremble for your own person, tremble at least for the lives of your people. They abandoned wives, children, property, to follow your fortunes. Others, compelled to remain in large towns, were exposed to the cruelties of the SIXTEEN, for having opened their gates to you ; and will you now hesitate to preserve your own life which alone can preserve their lives ? Your majesty has still a sufficient number of open enemies to combat, in France, in Flanders, and in Spain ; expel these domestic assassins ; provided you banish them, we shall have nothing to fear. The Spaniard can only enslave us by spilling your blood ; the Jesuits, their instruments will never remain quiet till they have seen it flow from your heart. Hitherto our vigilance has prevented regicide ; but, Sire, if they are allowed to remain, they will find new murderers, they will confess them and absolve them, as they did Barrière, and we, with all our watchfulness, cannot guarantee your safety.

“ You are the eldest son of the most noble, the most august, the most ancient family in France ; your life has been a series of triumphs and trophies, of victories and laurels ; and where are the traitors, where are the bastard French, who dare insinuate

into your majesty's mind that you ought to be cautious lest you should offend foreign princes, and thus persuade you to foster murderers who seek every opportunity to put you to death? The kings of France have been accustomed to dictate the law, not receive it. The God of battles, whose hand has conducted you thus far, destines you to still higher glories; but, Sire, do not despise the warnings he has given you; banish, with the assassin Jesuits, all who, seeking to build their fortunes on your grave, endeavour to retain them in your kingdom."

Arnauld concluded his vehement harangue by demanding, at the request of the university, that the Jesuits should be banished from the kingdom, and from all countries depending on his majesty, and that they should quit France in fifteen days after the notice of banishment had been served at each of their colleges or houses. In the event of their not obeying the order, he demanded that, without any form of procedure, they should be condemned as guilty of high-treason, and as having conspired against the life of the king.

Louis Dollé, advocate of the curates of Paris, pleaded after Arnauld. He spoke against the Jesuits with equal force and eloquence, but in a more moderate tone. He observed that they were not members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, either as secular or regular priests; that they had only been received in France in the character of a collegiate society, and on the express condition that they would not undertake any thing to the prejudice of the bishops or curates; that far from observing these conditions, they had been the censors of the clergy,

pretending to be universal pastors and guardians of the church; that by virtue of the privileges too prodigally granted them by the pope, and which the colloquy of Poissy forbade them to exercise, they had not only exalted themselves above the curates, but even above the bishops, and had disturbed the whole hierarchical discipline. He painted in the blackest colours the furious zeal they had displayed against the king during the league. "Dare you deny," said he, apostrophizing them, "dare you deny that when the late king, Henry III., was at Saint Cloud, in 1589, you went daily to the trenches distributing money to the soldiers, and exhorting them to persist in their rebellion? Have you not been compelled to acknowledg  that a priest of your company was the chief of the Sixteen, and presided at the meetings of those villains?"

Passing from this reproach to one of a graver character, the advocate accused them with having been the accomplices of Barri re, and thus maintained the charge. "The Jesuits," said he, "admit in their own apologies that Varade, having listened to the assassin, who asked him if he ought to kill the king, judged from his countenance, manner, and language that he was insane, and told him that he could give him no advice, because, being a priest, he would incur the censure of irregularity, if he offered an opinion on a subject which would prevent his celebrating mass, which he wished to do immediately. Gracious God," continued the orator, "is it possible that a priest, on the point of offering up a sacrifice of peace, dare to affirm that he was not permitted to dissuade from regicide! Hypocrites that

you are! think you that the saving of a man's life is a violation of the sabbath? Your rules permit you to practise medicine and surgery, and yet you make it a scruple of conscience to snatch the knife from him who is about to plunge it into the heart of your father! Your own excuse is your condemnation, and proves to which side you lean.

"I know well," continued Dollé, addressing himself to the judges, "that Varade is the only one punishable by law. What, then! must we delay the expulsion of all of them, till they have killed as many kings as there are Jesuits. But, gentlemen, it is not Varade alone, but the whole society, who have renewed, by the execrable doctrines they inculcate, the murderous policy of the Old Man of the Mountain, that formidable prince of assassins. There are but few of them who were not implicated in the infernal plot. Their sermons prove it."

Dollé next dwelt on the evils which the Jesuits had caused by the system of confession. "It is not necessary," said he, "to cite examples; there is not a respectable family in France which cannot adduce several. I shall content myself with noticing one quite recent, and of public notoriety. The Jesuits of Fribourg wished to persuade the small Catholic cantons to separate themselves from the small Protestant cantons, and break their union, which is the *palladium* of Switzerland; but finding the men too firm, they imitated the serpent who tempted Eve. They addressed themselves to the women, and advised them to refuse conjugal privileges to their husbands till they had consented to dissolve the al-

liance. They obeyed their directors, and their husbands, having heard from them by whom they were seduced, punished their seducers as they deserved."

From their system of confessions, the advocate returned to their doctrine, and concluded his pleading in these terms: "We have been told that the Jesuits wished to assassinate the king; not only have we evidence of the fact, but the traitor has confessed that he counselled the deed. And can we doubt, after that, what we ought to do to those who would cut all our throats if they had the opportunity? If you do not now banish them from the kingdom, you will positively establish them. Our first movements are full of vigour and spirit, but they slacken with time: of this we have already had too much proof, for during thirty years that this question has been agitated, we have slumbered and have not thought of the evil till we have been made to feel its pressure. The Jesuits, who know our weak point, wish to protract the sentence by delaying the trial, and thus gaining time, which gains every thing in France. Those for whom I speak know that their sacred profession prevents them demanding vengeance on the wickedness of their opponents. But, gentlemen, as in ancient times the augurs of Rome were obliged to advise the senate concerning all prodigies that appeared, that they might avert the evils they presaged by expiations, in a similar manner the plaintiffs, who have the charge of things holy and sacred, as the augurs formerly had, apprise you that there is a great prodigy in this city, and in other towns of France: it is this,

—*that men who call themselves religious teach their pupils the lawfulness of killing kings. Avert, then, the evils of this prodigy by your prudence.*”

Duret, advocate of the Jesuits, fearing to encounter public animadversion, roused to the highest pitch by these speeches, went secretly to Tours, without awaiting the close of the pleadings. This incident, favourable to the wily artifices of the Jesuits, suspended the decision of parliament, who could not pronounce sentence till they had heard the defence of the accused; but Henry IV., who was not ignorant that during the troubles of the league the Jesuits had won over allies who exerted themselves energetically in their favour, and who knew also of what they were capable, felt that, in order to destroy the criminal faction, it was indispensable that justice should take its course, and that they should be expelled the kingdom. In consequence he addressed a note to the parliament, by which he formally commanded them not to listen to any dilatory pleas, but proceed to judgment. The will of the king being thus imperatively expressed, the Jesuits saw that they could not elude the law, and decided on presenting their defence through father Barny, to whom they gave the title of Attorney-general of the Jesuits, regents, and scholars of the college of Clermont. This Jesuit pleaded that the form of action was irregular, and therefore that it must be dismissed; but parliament overruled the plea, and determined on pronouncing sentence. Unfortunately this resolution was not carried into effect, and the Jesuits took advantage of the remissness of parliament to renew their intrigues, and form new

plots against the life of the king. It was not long before they found an instrument of their vengeance.

While this process was being carried on, hostilities were resumed against the remnant of the league. The Duke of Montpensier laid siege to Honfleur, the only town in Lower Normandy which persisted in its rebellion. The whole of Upper Normandy had submitted, Villars, Governor of Rouen, having returned to his allegiance. Honfleur surrendered after a spirited defence, in which the besiegers sustained considerable loss. Several other towns in different provinces followed this example; and about the same time Charles of Lorraine, Duke of Elbœuf, joined the royal party, stipulating for a pension of thirty thousand francs, and the government of Saint Marthe, both of which demands were conceded.

Mayenne still continued obstinate. The princes of his family met at Ba-le-Duc, to decide on their future plans. The Duke of Lorraine inclined for peace, but the Dukes of Mayenne and Aumale opposed his pacific views. It was decided that they should treat with the Archduke Ernest, the new Governor of the Low Countries, and endeavour through him to obtain supplies from Spain. But the Spanish ministers were divided in opinion. Count Charles of Mansfeldt, deeming the subjugation of France now impossible, wished to concentrate all their forces to maintain themselves in the Low Countries, which they now held by a precarious tenure, observing that Philip might lose that part of his hereditary dominions in the attempt to seize the kingdom of his rival. On the other hand, the Count

of Fuentes, wrongly informed of the affairs of France by the Duke of Feria, persisted in aiming at the election of the infanta ; when, however, they heard that Paris was irrecoverably lost, the Archduke Ernest determined to abandon these chimerical pretensions, and confine himself to the conquest of Picardy and Burgundy, as some indemnity for the vast expenditure incurred by the court of Madrid in upholding the league. This last plan of operations was approved of by Philip.

Mansfeldt opened the campaign by laying siege to La Cappelle, a strong town on the frontier, but at that time badly supplied with ammunition. It made a spirited, but short resistance, when the governor, De Mailleraye, capitulated, marching out with the honours of war. This military reverse was more than balanced by a moral triumph that Henry now achieved in the capital. The parliament was reformed ; but such of the magistrates appointed by Mayenne who had voted against the election of the infanta, were retained in office, though their pre-cedency was destroyed. Harlay, who had presided when the parliament sat at Tours, became first president of that of Paris, and Le Maistre, who had held the first seat during the troubles, was now reduced to the seventh. They decided that obedience should be yielded to Henry IV., as lawful successor to the kingdom, declaring all who refused to acknowledge him, rebels and traitors ; by another decree they deprived the Duke of Mayenne of the office and title of lieutenant-general of the kingdom. A similar decree was passed by the Sorbonne, who, to the number of seventy, declared that the absolu-

tion given to the king by the Archbishop of Bourges, was valid and efficient, and that none could decline to recognize him, without being guilty of mortal sin. This ecclesiastical body, headed by James Amboise, rector of the university of Paris, went in procession to the palace and did homage.

However mortifying the capture of La Cappelle was to the king, it was a source of extreme embarrassment to Mayenne. It clearly proved that the Spaniards were prosecuting the war on their own account, and independently of him. This slight he attributed to the Duke of Feria, and determined on a personal interview with the archduke, who received him graciously, hoping that he would place himself under the protection of Spain, as the Duke of Aumale had done. To such a humiliation Mayenne would not submit, on which the Spanish counsellors advised his arrest, but the archduke would not countenance such an act of treachery, and it was finally agreed that Mayenne should unite his forces with Mansfeldt, and carry on the war jointly with that general.

The king, at the head of twelve thousand foot, and two thousand horse, laid siege to Laon, in which Mayenne had placed his son, and the greater part of his personal property. Mansfeldt marched to its relief, and his first attack on an outpost of the besiegers was successful. The royalists intercepted an abundant caravan of provisions and military stores, forwarded from Noyon to the beleaguered town, and a further supply sent from La Fere to the Spanish camp. Mayenne was compelled to retreat, which he did in good order in face of the enemy, and

Laon surrendered to the king on the 22nd of July, 1594. Amiens next submitted, the inhabitants having driven out the Duke of Aumale. The Duke of Lorraine concluded a truce with the king, and the young Duke of Guise took the oath of allegiance, receiving as the price of his submission the government of Provence, four hundred thousand crowns to pay his father's debts, and many ecclesiastical preferments for his brother, vacant by the recent death of the Cardinal of Bourbon.

The league was thus crumbling into pieces, and the triumph of the royalists seemed speedy, certain, and complete, when the Jesuits made another attempt to murder the king. Jean Chatel, son of a draper at Paris, was the instrument of their vengeance. On the 27th of November, 1594, the king, having returned from Picardy, alighted at the hotel of the fair Gabrielle, booted and spurred. Several gentlemen repaired thither to pay him their respects. As Henry was stooping to raise an officer who was in the act of saluting him on one knee, the assassin, who had entered the saloon with the crowd, aimed a knife at his breast, but the movement of Henry prevented the blow taking effect where the murderer had intended; it struck the upper jaw, cut the lip, and dislodged a tooth. Chatel attempted to escape, but the king's fool, Mathurin, having closed the door, he was seized. On being interrogated he fully confessed that the Jesuits had instigated him to the crime.

Jean Chatel was tried, and convicted of regicide. He was sentenced to have his flesh pulled off with pincers in the four principal quarters of the city, to have his right hand cut off, and his body torn to

pieces by four horses. The Jesuit Guignard was sentenced to the gallows; two others of the fraternity, Guret and Alexander Hay, a Scotchman, were condemned to perpetual banishment. The house of Chatel's father was razed to the ground, and a pyramid erected on it, to commemorate his crime. The Jesuits were banished from the kingdom, the parliament denouncing them "as corrupters of youth, disturbers of the public peace, and enemies to the king and state." In addition to this decree of the parliament, the clergy of Paris declared that the doctrine which taught the killing of princes was heretical and diabolical, and expressly charged men of all religious orders to acknowledge and obey King Henry IV., as their lawful prince, and insert in their masses those prayers which were wont to be said for the safety of the most Christian kings of France. ¹

¹ When the commissaries of police searched the papers of Guignard, they discovered a MS. eulogium of the massacre of Saint Bartholomew and of James Clement, which contained this atrocious paragraph: "The crown of France can and ought to be transferred to some other family than that of Bourbon; the Bearnais, although converted to the Catholic faith, would be treated more leniently than he deserves to be, if he was given a monacal crown in some strict convent, where he would have leisure to repent. If he cannot be deposed without war, wage war against him; if war cannot be successfully made against him, put him to death." These regicidal doctrines were first published by Mariana, a Spanish Jesuit, in 1599, in a work entitled, "*De Rege et Regis Institutione.*" In book i. c. 6, he extols the murderous attack of James Clement on Henry III., and thus praises the assassin; "*Cæso rege ingens sibi nomen fecit,*" thus exalting him into a hero, and then he calls him, "*Æternam Gallia decus,*"—the eternal glory of France. This passage was suppressed in the 8vo ed. published at Mayence in

On the 15th of January, 1595, Henry published a declaration of war against Spain. Philip answered it, stating that he warred only against the Prince of Bearn and his Huguenot confederates, and forbidding all his subjects to attack or molest such of the French as adhered to the Catholic party. This astucious answer did not produce the effect anticipated by the court of Madrid ; it seduced none from their allegiance ; on the contrary, Beaune, in Burgundy, submitted to Marshal Biron ; Ossone and Autun followed the example. The Constable of Castille, however, invaded Franche-Comté with eight thousand foot, and two thousand horse, effecting his junction with Mayenne, who had only one thousand foot and four hundred horse. He captured Vesoul, and advanced to the relief of Dijon, which the king was about to attack. Detachments of the hostile armies encountered each other, and many were slain on both sides ; but the Constable of Castille, not daring to hazard the whole of Franche-Comté on the chance of a single battle, retreated, in spite of the opposition of Mayenne. The king pursued the Spaniards, and defeated them at Fontaine-Française, when they crossed the Saone. This success of the royalists, coupled with the positive refusal of the Spanish gen-

1605. After the assassination of Henry IV. by Ravallac, in 1610, this book of Mariana's was burned by the common hangman, by order of the parliament of Paris. At the same time the following Jesuitical books on regicide were condemned ; that of Bellarmin, entitled, "*Traité de la Puissance du Pape dans les choses Temporelles ;*" that of Becanus, "*La Controverse d'Angleterre sur la Puissance du Roi et du Pape ;*" and that of Suarès, "*Defense de la Foi Catholique et Apostolique contre les erreurs de la secte Anglicane.*"

eral to strike a decisive blow, induced Mayenne to think of submission, and to this he was the more inclined in consequence of intelligence received from Rome, that the pope had become favourable to the claims of Henry IV. The duke, therefore, proposed the following preliminary terms of accommodation, which were accepted: that he, leaving the Spanish camp, should return to Chalons, where, without using arms, he should await the decision of Rome; on the other hand, that the king should not molest him or any of his followers, nor make any attempt against Chalons,—and, that when the papal absolution was obtained, the duke should take the oaths of allegiance. This truce being concluded, Mayenne ordered Tavannes, who commanded at Dijon, to surrender the town and its two castles.

Since his abjuration the king had given repeated and strict orders to maintain the Roman Catholic faith: he established the mass in all places from which it had been banished, and did all in his power to restore the estates of the clergy,—a task of extreme difficulty, as they were in the possession of lords and gentlemen, who had seized them during the troubles, and who refused to surrender them without compensation. He did not succeed in every instance, but still the friendly disposition thus manifested to the church, had considerably diminished the authority of the pope; moreover, the affairs of the king had become so prosperous that his holiness began to fear lest Henry might set him at defiance, no longer seek for absolution, and render the Gallican church independent of the apostolic see. Cardinal Serafino having remarked, “that Clement VII. had

lost England, and that Clement VIII. might lose France," and the Venetian and Florentine ambassadors having urged the necessity of pacifying Christendom, that all its energies might be employed to resist the Turks, who were making alarming inroads into Hungary, the pope at length resolved to consult the cardinals individually, and having collected their opinions he declared in full consistory that two-thirds of the cardinals had voted for the absolution of Henry IV.

On the 16th of September, 1595, the pope pronounced his decree, by which he absolved Henry of Bourbon, King of France and Navarre, from all censures, and received him into the bosom of the Catholic church on the following conditions. That the Roman Catholic religion should be introduced into the principality of Bearn, and four monasteries of friars and nuns be founded there; that the council of Trent be received by all France, except in those articles which might interfere with the privileges of the Gallican church, with which the pope agreed to dispense; that within the term of one year the young Prince of Condé should be confided to Roman Catholic preceptors, to be by them educated; that Roman Catholics of exemplary character should be nominated to prelacies; that all lands and goods taken from the church should be restored forthwith, and without any judicial procedure; that none should be elected to the magistracy who were heretics or suspected of heresy; that the king should give an account of his conversion and abjuration to all Christian princes. The spiritual penances imposed on him were, that on every Sunday and holy day he

should hear a conventual mass, either in his private chapel, or some church ; that, according to the custom of the kings of France he should hear mass every day, and that on some set days of the week he should say certain prayers ; that he should fast on Fridays and Sundays, and receive the communion publicly four times in a year.¹

These terms were accepted by the king's representatives, who knelt down at the gate of St. Peter's church, and abjured the heresies contained in a written document ; they were touched on the head by Cardinal Santa Severina, and received absolution ; the church was then opened and immediately resounded with music, while the castle of Saint Angelo fired salvos of artillery. Cardinal Alessandro di Medici was appointed legate of France, to report the papal decision, and cause it to be published in every church. The Duke of Elbœuf had prevailed on the Duke of Mercœur to sign a truce with the king in Brittany, and internal peace being thus established, Henry had no other enemies but the Spaniards on the side of Flanders.

The Archduke Ernest being dead, and Count Charles of Mansfeldt having been ordered to Hungary, the command of the Low Countries devolved on the Count of Fuentes, who, eager to distinguish himself, laid siege to Dourlens,² which town he

¹ Davila, p. 675.

² At the siege of Dourlens, Admiral Villars, who had so bravely held Rouen for the league, till relieved by the Duke of Parma, was slain. He was killed on the field of battle, according to Sully, l. vii. L'Etoile relates his death differently. He says that Villars, having been made prisoner by some Neapoli-

seized, after having gained a victory over the French. He next made himself master of Cambray, and De Rosne, one of his lieutenants, captured Calais.¹ Ardres also fell into his hands, and the only conquest made by the king, to compensate these losses, was the recovery of La Fere.

While the war was thus being carried on, the cardinal-legate arrived in Paris, and having discharged the object of his mission, began to negotiate a peace between the two crowns. It was indeed the general interest of Christendom that hostilities should cease, for Spain and France, by mutually exhausting their strength, encouraged the Turks to attempt the conquest of Hungary, and it was justly apprehended that, if successful, they would penetrate into Austria. Henry himself eagerly desired a pacification, for the Calvinists began to desert him,—Elizabeth of England gave him but little support,—the Dutch

tans, a Spanish captain, named Contrera, entered on purpose into a dispute with some of them, as to whose custody he should be placed in, and on their refusal to surrender him, Contrera put him to death. L'Etoile adds, that the hatred the Spaniards bore him, ever since he quitted the party of the league for that of the king, was the true cause of his death.

¹ Queen Elizabeth offered to defend Calais against the Spaniards, upon condition that the place was put into the hands of the English. Sancy, who was then ambassador at London, made answer to the queen, that the king, his master, would rather see it in the hands of the Spaniards than in those of the English; and Henry himself said, "If I am to be bit, I would as soon it were by a lion as a lioness." This was the reason why Elizabeth afterwards refused to besiege that town, when the king was encamped before Amiens, though he then offered to put it into her hands by way of security for her pecuniary advances.—*Mathieu*, tom. ii. l. ii. p. 223.

were barely able to protect themselves,—and the Protestant princes of Germany required all their resources to defend their frontiers against the Mahometans.

The king's absolution being confirmed, Mayenne took the oaths of allegiance and received liberal terms. Henry granted him Soissons, Chalons, and Sevre for his security, with power to retain them six years, when they were to be surrendered to the crown. The king agreed to confirm all appointments made by the duke while he was lieutenant-general of the kingdom, provided the holders of them took out new patents under the royal seal. A full amnesty for the past was conceded. Mayenne also received the government of the Isle of France, and the superintendence of the finances; his son obtained the government of Chalons. In this agreement all Mayenne's friends, who chose to submit, were included. The sentences and judgments pronounced against the Dukes of Mercœur and Aumale were suspended, and six weeks were allowed them to tender their allegiance.

The interview at which the king and Mayenne were reconciled took place at Monceaux, and the particulars of it are thus narrated by Sully. "The king was walking in the park, attended only by myself, when the Duke of Mayenne arrived, who put one knee to the ground with the lowest submission, and added to a promise of inviolable fidelity his acknowledgments to his majesty for having detached him, as he expressed himself, from the arrogance of the Spaniards and the subtlety of the Italians. Henry, who, as soon as he saw him approach, had

advanced to meet him, embraced him thrice, and forcing him to rise, again embraced him, with that amiability which he never withheld from a subject who returned to his duty ; then taking his hand, he made him walk with him in the park, conversing familiarly on the embellishments he proposed to make. The king walked so fast that Mayenne, fatigued by the heat of the weather, his corpulency, and sciatica, suffered great inconvenience without venturing to complain. The king perceiving it by the flushed countenance of his companion, who was bathed in perspiration, whispered to me, ‘ If I walk longer with this burly body, I shall revenge myself upon him without any difficulty for all the mischief he has done us.’ Then turning to the duke he said, ‘ Tell me truly, cousin, do I not walk a little too fast for you ?’ Mayenne replied that he was almost stifled, and that if his majesty walked but a little while longer, he would kill him without designing it. ‘ Hold there, cousin,’ rejoined the king, with a smile and embracing him, ‘ this is all the revenge you will ever experience from me.’ Mayenne, sensibly affected by this frank behaviour, attempted to kneel and kiss the hand his majesty extended to him, protesting that he would henceforward serve him against his own relations. ‘ I believe it,’ said Henry, ‘ and that you may love and serve me a long time, go to the castle and rest, and refresh yourself, for you have much need of it. I will give you a couple of bottles of Arbois wine, for I know you will not dislike it ; here is Rosne, who will accompany you ; he shall do the honours of my house, and attend you to your chamber : he is one of my oldest servants,

and one of those who is the most rejoiced at your resolving to serve me and love me affectionately.' The king continuing his walk left me with the Duke of Mayenne, whom I conducted to a summer-house to repose himself, and afterwards attended him to his horse, as much satisfied with the king and me, as we both were with him."¹

While the king was endeavouring to conciliate his own subjects by generosity, and the legate was exerting himself to terminate the Spanish war by negociation, intelligence arrived that Amiens had been surprised. Henry was thunder-struck at this unexpected disaster, and said passionately to the beautiful Gabrielle, "I have sufficiently acted the King of France; I must now resume the character of the King of Navarre." It was on the 11th of March, 1597, that Porto Carrero, the Spanish Governor of Dourlens, obtained possession of Amiens through a stratagem. He disguised thirty Spaniards, as countrymen and countrywomen, who stopped up one of the gates of the city by emptying a cart loaded with sacks of walnuts; one of these sacks was left open so that the contents were scattered over the ground, and while the guards were amusing themselves by picking them up, some Spanish soldiers, who had concealed themselves behind the hedges, marched up, and made themselves masters of the town. Porto Carrero with the main body of his forces quickly followed, and secured his conquest.

The king hastened to expel the enemy from this

¹ Sully, lib. viii.

important city, within twenty-eight leagues of Paris. It was attacked and defended with equal courage and skill. Mayenne here distinguished himself on the side of the royalists. Amiens resisted till the 25th of September, when it capitulated, the garrison marching out with all the honours of war. In this siege, Porto Carrero¹ and De Rosne were slain, and when the place surrendered, the Marquis of Montenegro was the commandant, who rode up to the king, truncheon in hand, alighted and kissed his knee, saying with a loud voice, "that he delivered up the city into the hands of a soldier king, since it had not pleased the king his master to cause it to be relieved by soldier commanders." Henry answered, "that it ought to satisfy him that he had defended the place like a soldier, and now restored it to the lawful king with the honour of a soldier."

This was the last military event of the campaign, and negociations were entered into at Vervins, a town on the confines of Picardy and Artois, for peace. The urgency of the affairs of Flanders, and the scarcity of money, induced the King of Spain to put an end to hostilities. He was far advanced in years, and wished to secure to his son the inheritance of the Low Countries before his death, and these views were supported by the archduke, who was about to marry the Infanta Isabella, and receive the governorship of those provinces. Henry was equally desirous of peace, that he might reform the

¹ Porto Carrero used to say, the three greatest commanders he knew were, Henry for the conduct of a large army, the Duke of Mayenne for the siege of a town, and Marshal Biron for a pitched battle.—*Mathieu*, tom. ii. lib.ii p. 232.

internal administration of his kingdom. The Spaniards offered to restore Ardres, Dourlens, La Chapelle, Castelet, and Montaulin, in Picardy, and the port of Blavet¹ in Brittany; but insisted on retaining Calais, so long as the Dutch war continued. The French demanded the immediate restoration of Calais, and claimed Cambray. It was contended by the Spanish negociators that all old pretensions between the two crowns had been adjusted and terminated, at the treaty of Chateau Cambresis, in 1559, when it had been decided, that Cambray was not within the royal jurisdiction of France, but belonged to the archbishop, under the protectorate of the sovereign of the Low Countries, and that its usurpation by the Duke of Alençon gave no title to the pretensions of Henry IV. This argument prevailed with the French diplomatists, and each party abandoned their respective demands on Calais and Cambray. Only one point now remained, which related to Blavet; the King of France desired its surrender in the state in which it then was, with all its artillery and munitions of war; the Spaniards insisted on the demolition of the fort which they had built, and the removal of the guns which belonged to them, and to this arrangement the French ultimately consented.

The next difficulty that arose related to the allies. Henry desired that an agreement should be made with the Queen of England and the States of Holland, while the King of Spain wished that the Duke of Savoy and the Duke of Mercœur should

¹ Blavet is now called Port-Louis, and is situate within the bishopric of Vannes.

be included in the peace. On these particulars an angry discussion arose, for the French negociators refused to comprehend the Duke of Mercœur, as being the king's subject and a rebel; the Spaniards answered, that the Dutch were equally the rebellious subjects of Philip. This dispute threatened to rekindle the war, when Mercœur¹ submitted, and England and Holland declared their intention of continuing hostilities against Spain.

Nothing now remained to be settled but the claims of the Duke of Savoy, who insisted on holding the Marquisate of Saluzzo, as a grand fief of the crown of France. This was resisted, and after much debate, both parties agreed to refer the point to the pope, who was to give his award within twelve months.

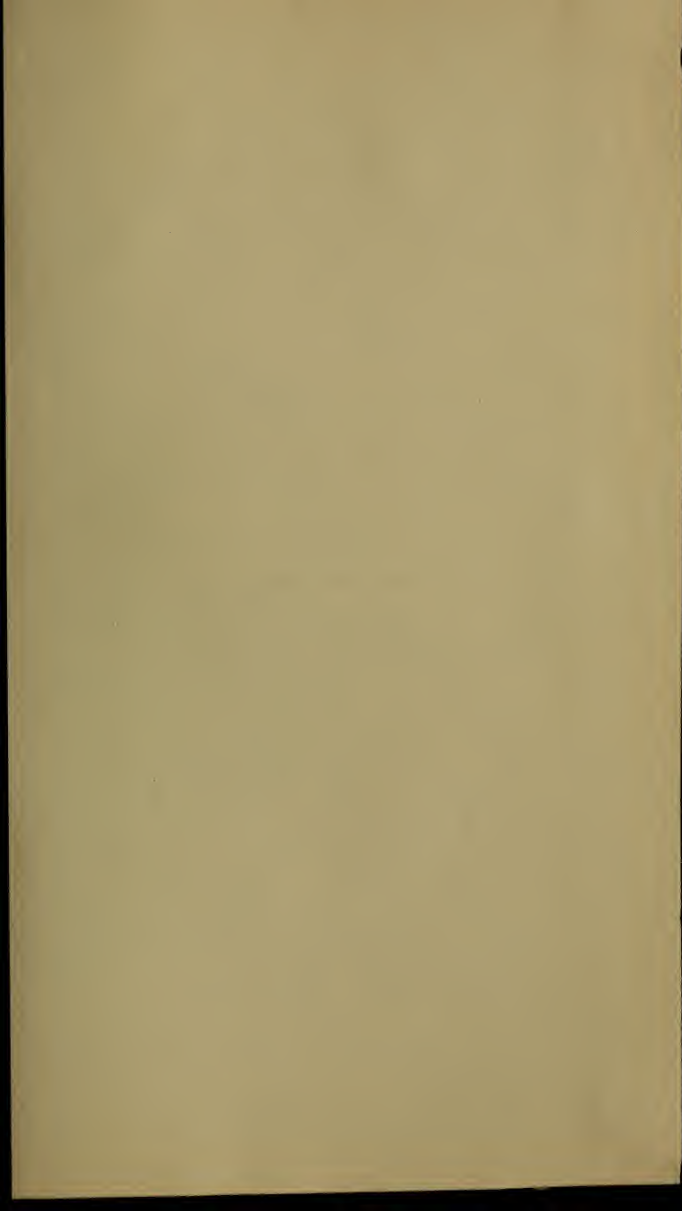
The peace of Vervins was signed on the 2nd of May, 1598, and published in Paris, Amiens, and Brussels, on the 7th of June in the same year. The religious wars which had continued during thirty-eight years, reckoning from the conspiracy of Amboise in 1560 to 1598, had spread ruin and desolation throughout France, spilling its best blood and vitiating the moral character of its people. It was an experiment on a grand scale to establish the sacred principle of religious liberty, but it failed; the age was not ripe for truth. Moreover, the con-

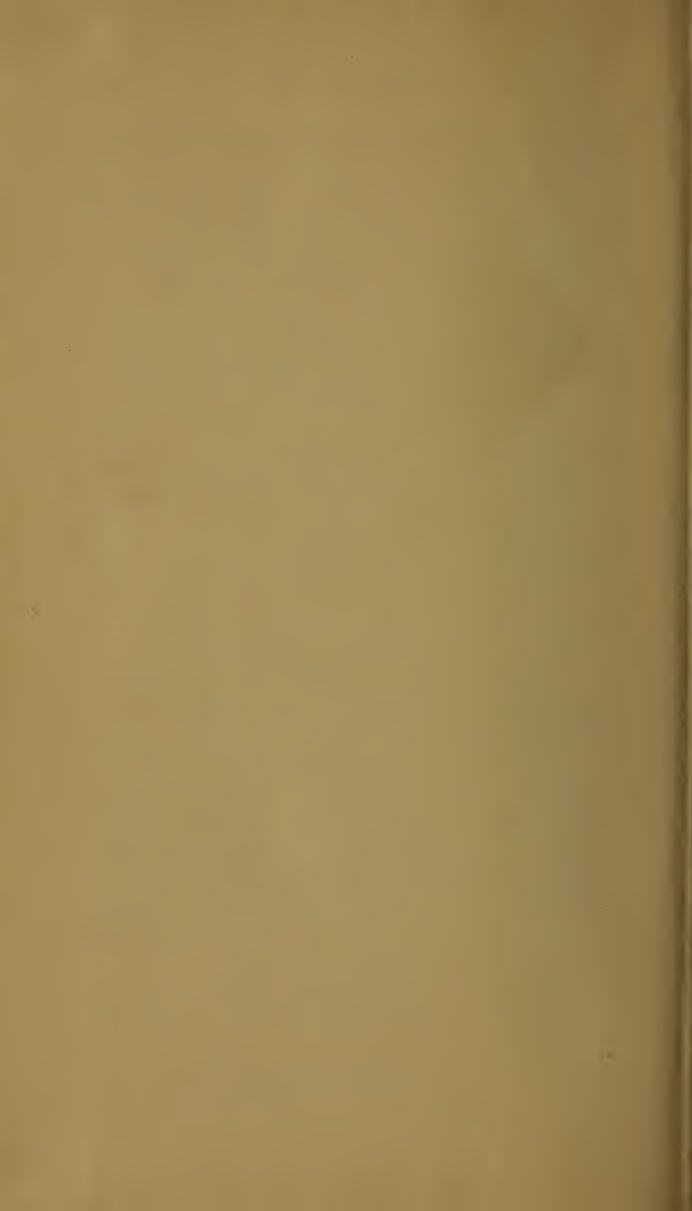
¹ The Duke of Mercœur's daughter was married to Cæsar, son of Henry IV. and the fair Gabrielle. Their nuptials were celebrated at Angers, with as much pomp as would have been displayed, had Cæsar been legitimate. He was but four years of age, and his wife only two years of age, when the ceremony was performed.—*Perefixe*.

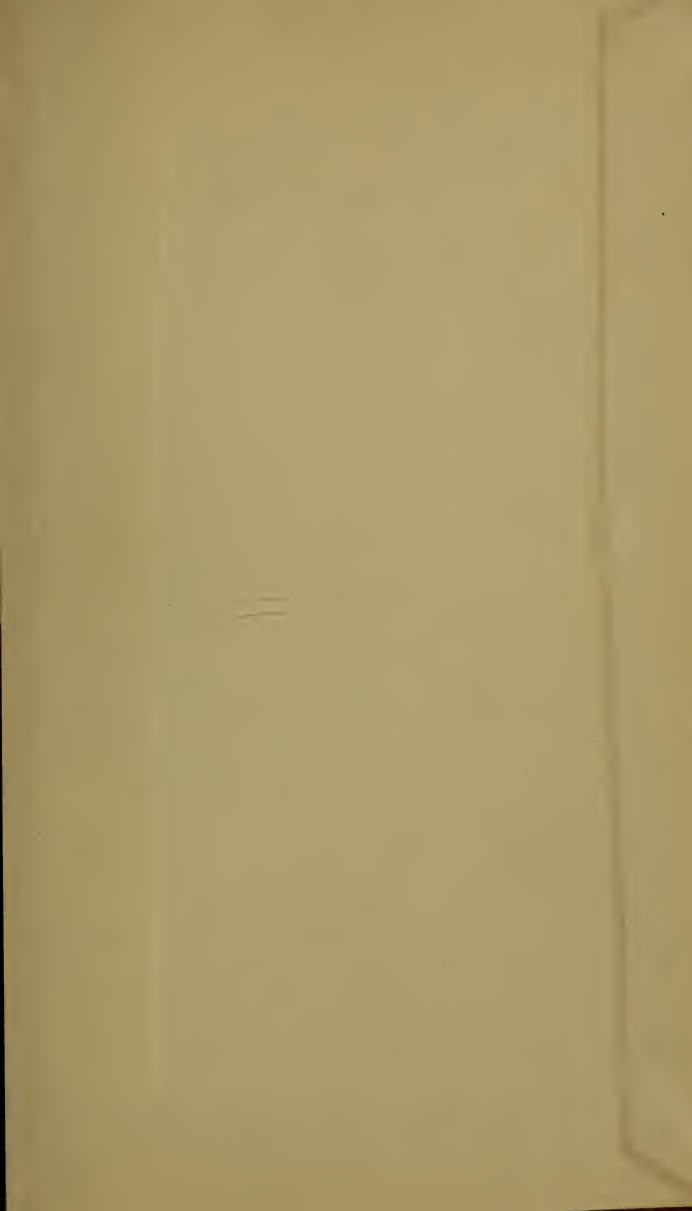
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tiguity of Rome, Spain, and Austria, blighted the young germs of freedom. Despotism coalesced against the right of private judgment, aided by the inquisition and the Jesuits. It is true that the liberal spirit was awakened during this fearful struggle, and the preacher Jurieu proclaimed before Locke the sovereignty of the people; but the theory was not reduced into practice. Even the edict of Nantes which followed the peace of Vervins, was a very equivocal boon to Calvinism, for though the profession of it was tolerated, it was under such restrictions as gave it the character of a gilded slavery. It was not a charter of liberty, in the only sense in which liberty is valuable, though the exclusive Roman Catholics considered even its niggardly concessions unjust. Henry IV. himself was no friend to constitutional rights; he was in heart a despot; he opposed the decrees of parliament by the idle ordinances of beds of justice. How, indeed, can we admire a prince who ostentatiously boasted that he wished every peasant had a fowl daily for his dinner, and yet signed the atrocious law which condemned a peasant to the whip and the galleys for killing a rabbit! The despotism of Richelieu and Louis XIV. may be traced to Henry IV. He was popular withal, and still lives in the memory of Frenchmen.

THE END.







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